



The keyboard curriculum encourages teachers and pupils to make full use of the functions of digital keyboards, including the use of external music technology where appropriate.

Each Programme of Study has its contents grouped under the following Areas:

- A** Listening and internalising
- B** Making and controlling musical sounds
- C** Creating and developing musical ideas
- D** Playing music
- E** Playing music with others
- F** Performing and communicating

Programme of Study 1

A Listening and internalising

P1 - A1

Listen and respond to music in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them

Introduce learners to a wide variety of music during lessons.



Listening should be an enjoyable, active experience. As well as enhancing musical learning, it supports the development of lifelong skills of enjoying and appreciating music as a listener/audience member.

Encourage and plan for a range of responses when listening to music: movement, actions, discussion, writing, drawing, etc.

Encourage learners to share and talk about music that they enjoy listening to.



This helps to develop an inclusive lesson culture where learners feel that their music is valued and respected.

Encourage learners to develop their verbal responses through structured activities that include questions to focus their listening, e.g. how would you describe the character of this melody/rhythm?

Ask learners to listen and respond to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Learners should be encouraged to listen to music from a wide variety of styles and cultures.

P1 - A2

Have some aural perception of the music to be played

Perform a piece to be learnt. Ask learners to describe its character using appropriate questions to unlock their creative response, e.g. Before listening to the music: 'How do you feel right now?' And afterwards: 'Did listening to the music change your mood at all?'



It is important that listening is approached in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

P1 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements of pulse, pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics and texture

Encourage learners to mark the pulse of music played by the teacher or other learners by clapping, tapping different parts of the body, walking around the room etc.



Listening games can be linked to all the pieces being learnt in the early stages.

Ask learners to respond physically to music being played, i.e. moving in time or beating time to music with a regular pulse. Repeat at different tempi.

Go through the piece again with learners, using gestures or actions to indicate rests.



Ensure that learners understand the difference between tempo, pulse and rhythm. There are many online tools for exploring these elements, such as Chrome Music Lab (Rhythm and Song Maker).

Help learners to sing/play short, simple rhythmic/melodic phrases by ear.

Ask learners simple questions about pulse, pitch, rhythm, dynamics, etc.



Further ideas in developing aural acuity can be found in the approaches of Kodaly and Dalcroze (Eurhythmics).

Ask learners to sing songs they know well, singing some phrases in their heads at a given signal from the teacher. When learners sing aloud again, they should be singing at the correct pitch and pulse.



The main aim is to internalise the sound before relating it to a symbol.

Ask learners to sing the final note to complete a melodic phrase played/sung by the teacher.



In the first instance, it helps if the penultimate note is either the leading note or the supertonic.

P1 - A4

Recognise and convey in their playing simple melodic patterns, e.g. repetition of main tune

Ask learners how many phrases there are in a short piece. Where do they start and finish?



Encourage learners to match physical movements to the structure when listening to the piece, e.g. tap the pulse on their knees for the first phrase, their heads for the second phrase, etc.

Listen to other short pieces and ask learners to indicate when the main tune is repeated: count the number of times it is repeated and describe what happens in between.



There are many opportunities to use a wide range of musical styles from around the world.

P1 - A5

Using appropriate notation, make links between sounds and symbols, e.g. shape of the melody, repetition

Encourage learners to create graphic scores of music they listen to.



Instead of using paper, this activity can also be done on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, either using a drawing app or a specific graphic score app.

Display two or more rhythms. Perform one and ask learners to identify which they heard.



In group or whole-class lessons, learners can lead this activity. Notation can also be dragged into position to create different rhythms on an interactive whiteboard or tablet, using a presentation program such as PowerPoint or Google Slides. Learners can then create their own rhythms to work with.

Using notation, ask learners to clap/play/sing/say short phrases of a piece and count silent bars in their heads, e.g. bars 1–2 clapped/ played/sung/said, bars 3–4 counted and bars 5–6 clapped/played/sung said.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the main features of a piece before playing/singing it – e.g. shape of melody and obvious repetitions.

Play a familiar piece incorrectly. Ask learners to spot the mistakes.



Notation must be appropriate and take into consideration the learner, the instrument and the genre. Notations may include staff notation, rhythm grids, dot notation, chord symbols and graphic scores.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 1

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P1 - B1

Posture and freedom of movement (and keyboard geography)

Posture and freedom of movement:

- Play with physical freedom and ease, without unnecessary tension:
 - across a comfortable range of the instrument
 - developing a comfortable and balanced position with appropriate forearm, wrist and hand positions

Keyboard geography:

- Understand the layout of the keyboard identify the letter names of the keys
- Observe the repeating pattern of the keyboard and relate that to aural considerations
- Begin to develop awareness of the visual and aural differences between whole and half tones

Posture and freedom of movement:

Explain to learners the importance of correct set-up procedures. Ensure that keyboards are set up appropriately and that learners strictly observe health and safety rules.



Ensure that the layout of the teaching space is suitable and safe before learners arrive. It helps group communication if instruments are arranged facing each other rather than the wall.

Emphasise the importance of instruments being at a suitable height and distance when sitting/standing.



Particular care needs to be taken if keyboards are placed on desks or tables since learners should not sit too low or stand too high. Using suitable keyboard stands can aid the development of a good posture.



Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.

Demonstrate sitting and standing in a variety of positions, asking learners to note how posture affects the position of the forearm and wrist. Explain that the forearm should be parallel with the floor.



Creating effective exercises and drills to enable learners to adopt appropriate posture is invaluable in large-group and whole-class teaching.



It promotes independence, giving learners the necessary skills to recreate the desired posture in their individual practice.

Ask learners to place their hands palm-up in their laps, fully relaxed (fingers will curve naturally). Then turn hands over and place them on the keys, ensuring fingers are curved appropriately.



Reinforce the importance of always taking a moment to ensure that posture is correct before starting to play, whether in the lesson or in individual practice.



Encourage self-evaluation by use of a mirror. Video-recording could also be used for this purpose, but it is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

If learners have photographic permission, encourage them to take photos of themselves and annotate them to identify elements of good posture. This can be done with a photo editing app or presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides.

Keyboard geography:

Invite learners to explore the keyboard, asking them to play all the groups of two and/or three black notes, helping them to recognise the pattern.



Encourage learners to explore the full range of the instrument, moving so that they can comfortably reach the extremes of range.

Play a variety of intervals, asking learners to identify octaves aurally when they are played.

Play a game where learners locate notes in different octaves, naming and playing them as quickly as possible.

Ask learners to 'say and play' the musical alphabet on the keyboard, both ascending and descending.

P1 - B2

Registration

- Make creative and musically expressive choices by:
 - understanding the layout of the basic controls on the keyboard
 - applying given registration directions (selecting voices, rhythms, adjusting the volume and tempo controls)

Show learners how to select different sounds. Discuss their musical effect.



When introducing the different voices on the keyboard, discuss the character of each sound. Talk about the acoustic and electronic sounds after which they are named.

Show learners how to engage and select auto-accompaniments. Then ask them to set up and play a variety of auto-accompaniments and discuss the effects.

P1 - B3

Fingering and articulation

- Recognise and use finger numbering
- Use appropriate right-hand fingering, initially within a single closed five-note hand position
- Use appropriate fingering for single fingered left-hand chords
- Play easy chord progressions, using major triads in single-finger mode, ensuring chords are clearly detached
- Play legato and non-legato
- Define short melodic phrases with guidance

Explain the conventional system for finger numbering on both hands, checking learners' understanding by asking them to use or identify certain fingers.

Monitor learners' use of all fingers while they play in a closed five-note hand position.

Explain that finger numbering should only be used as a means of establishing the correct hand position.



Learners sometimes use written fingering as an aid to note identification. This is counter-productive to the development of music reading because the eye tends to be distracted away from the notation. Avoid using unnecessary fingering.

Teach learners to play exercises in the closed five-note position evenly and equally. Draw attention to the relative ease/difficulty of using each finger independently.



Attention can be drawn to the muscular and bone construction of the hand, and the comparative weakness of the fourth and fifth fingers.

Show learners how single-finger chords can be played either by literally hopping with a single finger or by using a combination of fingers. Highlight the merits of each approach. Explain that using different fingers for each chord encourages a well-formed hand shape and finger independence, whereas using just one finger ensures chords are properly detached and encourages mobility of the wrist and forearm.



Just as pianists begin to learn finger technique playing individual notes, so keyboard players can use single-finger chords. Major triads are recommended first.

Ask learners to play chord progressions using major triads in single-finger mode, ensuring that the chords are properly detached. Demonstrate that if chords are not detached the keyboard may not respond correctly.



Unless clearly explained, using minor and/or seventh chords in single-finger mode can be counter-productive to learners developing a proper understanding of the formation of chords.

Play the right-hand melody of a known piece and ask learners to play the left-hand chords only.



Describing the lower part of the keyboard as 'hot' and the upper part as 'cool' may help to ensure that chords are detached while the melody remains legato!

Perform a short piece, asking learners to identify whether staccato or legato articulation is used. Discuss how this affects the character of the music.



Use imaginative analogies where possible when introducing legato, e.g. passing the baton in a relay race.

Ask learners to experiment with different articulations within pieces, listening and discussing how this affects the character.



Singing and speech can be used to illustrate the difference between various articulations.

Help learners to develop their ability to play legato, 'walking, not jumping', by using appropriate finger exercises.



Drawing lines from one note to another using coloured pencils (as in dot-to-dot books) may help to focus concentration.

P1 - B4

Coordination and rhythmic awareness

- Play with a secure pulse:
 - short pieces coordinating and integrating a simple right-hand melody and left-hand single-finger chords
 - keeping time with a simple auto-accompaniment, e.g. eight-beat
 - listening to and controlling the balance between melody and accompaniment

Ask learners to play a piece (in turn) with both right-hand melody and left-hand chords. While one learner plays, another can help the player's visual focus by following the notation with a pencil.



For instruments with touch response, it may be necessary to disengage this function so as to achieve an appropriate balance between melody and auto-accompaniment.

Repeat this with auto-accompaniment engaged. Teachers and learners can help the player by clapping time, singing, counting aloud or playing the melody together in unison.

Demonstrate the importance of achieving a satisfactory balance between melody and accompaniment. Show learners how to use appropriate registration settings and devices to help where appropriate, e.g. reducing the auto-accompaniment volume.



These activities are most useful when learners bring their own keyboards to the lesson rather than using school instruments.

Programme of Study 1

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P1 - C1

Improvise by exploring different sounds and creating repeated musical patterns or phrases

Ask learners to explore different ways of making musical sounds on the instrument in response to an imaginative or pictorial idea (without using the auto-accompaniment).



The teacher can promote learners' confidence by:

- demonstrating how to experiment with musical ideas
- providing step-by-step assistance with models, patterns and procedures
- emphasising the open-ended nature of the activity – all outcomes are valued and enjoyed

Help learners to make up short and simple rhythmic/melodic patterns from suggested musical starting points, e.g. pentatonic phrases, drones, ostinati. Abstract or pictorial ideas could also be used.



Rather than starting with complete scales, it may be more appropriate to choose two notes from a scale, increasing the number of notes gradually.

Repeat the process, selecting and discarding ideas and aiming for musical coherence.

Lead learners in a discussion about the musical effect of their improvisations.

Repeating an eight-bar chord pattern, play a two-bar 'question' phrase, asking learners to respond in turn by improvising a 2-bar 'answer' in time with the auto-accompaniment.

Play 'Follow my Leader': one player plays three or four notes, then the next player plays three or four more, starting on the last note of the first player, and so on.

Make use of instrumental skills when beginning to compose

Ask learners to compose short pieces from a given starting point, e.g. a story, poem, theme, picture, or one of the musical techniques suggested in C1. Discuss the outcomes. Initially, this could consist of asking learners to write down their improvisations as an aid to memory, perhaps using their own forms of shorthand as a precursor to staff notation.



Through composing, learners are able to explore the music from the inside. Composing is valid in its own right, but it can also be used to develop performing skills, knowledge and understanding. It may be necessary to score ideas for them since their creative imagination may run ahead of their ability to write down their ideas, at least where staff notation is concerned.



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Ask learners to extend a four-bar tune to eight bars, using notation where appropriate. Share tunes within a group, with learners playing each other's work.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions to others.

Encourage learners to use the keyboard in creative activities in the classroom, applying technical skills already acquired.



Productive links with general classroom work should be made wherever possible.

Programme of Study 1

D Playing music

P1 - D1

Work out by ear how to play short, easy phrases or patterns from well-known tunes

Choosing appropriate starting notes, play short, simple tunes with a limited range of notes, e.g. television jingles, folk-tunes, nursery rhymes. Ask learners to select one and explore it away from the instrument by:

- singing the melody
- drawing the melodic contour in the air
- clapping the rhythm

Next, ask learners to work out separate phrases by ear on their instrument, gradually building up the complete tune.

Ask learners to play the complete tune expressively to others.

As an extension activity, ask learners to teach the tune to other learners.



Many learners experiment with tunes they know before starting formal instrumental lessons.



Teachers should select tunes carefully, bearing in mind the implications of starting on different notes.

P1 - D2

Repeat short, easy rhythmic and melodic patterns by playing back from memory

Perform a piece and ask learners to respond to the music by clapping, tapping or moving with a regular pulse and at a variety of tempi.

Repeat, with learners substituting a different sound, gesture or action to indicate rests.



There is always scope to design new musical games in order to develop learners' short-term memory. These can often be invented together as the activity proceeds, building on prior learning.

Engage learners in 'copycat' exercises, either with or without notation, maintaining a secure pulse and rhythm. Incorporate different musical effects, such as contrasts of dynamics and articulation.

Ask learners to sing easy intervals and match them to notes on their instruments where appropriate.



At first, limit the phrase to be copied to possibly two bars of 2/4 or equivalent, using only two notes.

P1 - D3

Play short, easy pieces from appropriate notation/symbols



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Select pieces for learners from a range of different times and places, and in a variety of styles. Take into account:

- the musical and technical skills that will be needed
- opportunities to develop musical ideas
- learners' prior experience
- their personal response to the music
- their general musical interests

Teach learners to practise and play pieces that bring together right-hand melody, left-hand single finger chords and auto-accompaniment. The following approach includes a range of activities that contribute to this process:

- perform the piece, encouraging attentive listening. Repeat with learners following the notation and clapping the note values
- ask learners to play the opening phrase of the melody by ear
- ask learners to read and play the melody only. With group teaching, learners may be given a short time to practise the melody using headphones. Give particular help where it is needed

- play the auto-accompaniment, asking learners to play the melody together in unison and/or octaves
- ask learners to practise the piece with both hands together, without activating the auto-accompaniment rhythm; explain the importance of breaking down various skills when practising
- ask learners to play the tune and chords with auto-accompaniment, individually, or in unison as a group. In a group, learners can take turns at the auto-accompaniment. Discuss the outcomes
- perform a larger arrangement of the piece, e.g. including registration changes and some improvisation. Lead a discussion about arranging
- ask learners to arrange the piece and take turns performing to each other, discussing their approaches and interpretation
- help groups to make ensemble arrangements of pieces, which may include learners taking turns and playing together
- ask learners to continue playing and practising pieces to memorise them

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Adopt the holistic approach to teaching and learning.



Learners can use a pattern of these activities as a foundation for their personal practice routine, for example when learning a new piece, e.g.:

- playing just the right-hand tune
- playing the tune in time with a drum-beat
- practising tune and chords together, but without engaging the auto-accompaniment rhythm
- putting together the tune, chords and auto-accompaniment
- experimenting and creating an arrangement of the piece



These activities can be adapted and expanded across all five Programmes of Study.

P1 - D4

Memorise with accuracy selected short, simple pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from their repertoire by:

- building up short sections at a time
- identifying and remembering rhythmic patterns and the shape of the melody
- noting where repetitions and contrasts occur

- focusing on expressive details

From time to time, teach a short piece away from the music, only referring to the notation once it is learnt.

Encourage learners to play from memory to other learners.



Promote confidence by making memorisation of whole pieces a natural part of the learning process. Bear in mind that they are unlikely to be memorised properly until the performance is technically fluent. Some objectives are:

- to strengthen learners' confidence
- to focus on the expressive qualities of the music
- to enable learners to communicate more freely without having the constraints of notation

P1 - D5

Read and play at sight short, simple phrases at a regular pulse; begin to make links between sound and symbol



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Play an auto-accompaniment and lead learners in performing a range of rhythms by clapping, tapping, playing untuned percussion or playing a repeated note on the keyboard, using flash cards. Include rhythms to be encountered in pieces, encouraging learners to listen and stay in time with the auto-accompaniment.

Use flash cards for pitch recognition. Ask learners to name notes and find them on the keyboard. Devise games that help them to develop instant recall of notes and rhythms, heightening musical memory.



Presentation programs such as PowerPoint or Google Slides can be used to make flash cards to display on a tablet or interactive whiteboard. These have the advantage of being easily editable, so new rhythms and melodic patterns can be created as required by either the teacher or the learners.



The maxim 'sound before symbol' is as important now as ever. Reading notation is a means to making music, not an end in itself. Different forms of notation can be used, e.g. staff, graphic, as an aid to learning. Consider carefully whether notation is a help or hindrance in learning music from aural/oral traditions.



Help learners to gain enthusiasm for learning pieces, using notation when appropriate. Ensure that its use is encouraging rather than discouraging.

Devise a variety of games to explain staff notation to young beginners, e.g:

- use a large stave with movable notes (in the shape of small, furry toys)
- space permitting, play 'note jumping': mark out five lines on the floor with masking tape and ask learners to step or jump between them, calling out the note names and perhaps singing them as well
- play the 'musical alphabet' game: a learner says/sings a note name, the next learner says/sings the next one, and so on, up and down. Do the same missing out a note – G/B/D, etc.

P1 - D6

Begin to interpret music with some expression and with a sense of its intended effect; talk about its mood and how it is sung or played and suggest improvements to convey the character of the music

Show learners how to experiment with different ways of playing pieces, perhaps in relation to dynamics and tempi. Ask them to listen and decide which way of playing is most appropriate to the character of the music.

Involving all learners in the group, discuss ways of improving the interpretation, particularly in pieces that have few expressive indications.



Interpretation is the creative dimension of performing. At the earliest stage, learners should be encouraged to make expressive musical decisions, either intuitively or by evaluating their work. The teacher can help by being an informed listener, giving feedback and encouragement.

Programme of Study 1

E Playing music with others

P1 - E1

Play with the teacher and/or other learners, demonstrating some basic ensemble skills by listening, watching and keeping in time with the group

Create opportunities for learners to:

- play with an accompaniment, provided either by the teacher or by recorded means
- play in a small ensemble



In addition to their lessons, all learners should be provided with opportunities for participation in ensembles. By playing with others, they are likely to:

- increase their motivation and interest
- quicken their rate of progress
- widen their performing skills
- improve their personal and social skills



With carefully differentiated parts, even those at the earliest stages of learning can enjoy the sense of achievement of playing as part of an ensemble.

Ask learners to follow someone beating time.



This can be a fun activity, with the teacher or learners beating time at a variety of tempi.

P1 - E2

Explore and discuss the character of the music and the expressive possibilities

Discuss the mood of the music and how it can be conveyed.

With learners, assess their ensemble playing, identifying strengths and areas for further development. Make a recording for this purpose, if appropriate.

Programme of Study 1

F Performing and communicating

P1 - F1

Perform music to others, e.g. parents/carers, teachers, fellow learners and friends, demonstrating an awareness of the mood of the music

Organise opportunities for informal performances in lessons and for parents/carers, relatives and friends at home.



Performance is a key skill that should be a natural part of the learning process from the earliest lessons. Simulated performances in instrumental lessons are particularly beneficial, helping learners gain confidence. For young learners, performing to teddy bears can be an excellent first step to build confidence.

Ask learners to revise pieces already learnt and to perform them with expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive experience for everyone.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Pieces need to be chosen with care so that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Demonstrate to learners where and how to stand or sit, and help them to practise walking on and off stage. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage learners to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

Discuss the quality of their playing and, with guidance, learn from their performance

Help learners to evaluate each performance and suggest ways of making improvements and building up confidence. Promote self-evaluation as much as possible.



Ensure feedback is balanced, with an expectation that positives will be found. It can be very effective to sometimes focus only on what went well.

Where appropriate, use technology to make audio or video recordings during lessons so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Encourage learners to develop their own library of pieces that can be repeated in future.

Programme of Study 2

A Listening and internalising

P2 - A1

Listen to music with concentration and understanding in and out of lessons, enjoying their experiences and building on them

Engage learners in a wide variety of structured listening activities during lessons, continuing to encourage a range of responses as in Programme of Study 1 (e.g. physical, verbal, written or pictorial).

Ask learners to listen with concentration to different pieces of music in their own time and then describe them in the lesson, including aspects of dynamics, instrumentation, character, etc.



Support learners in their own listening by modelling questioning and other exploratory activities during lessons.

Continue to ask learners to share music that they enjoy with other learners.



Encourage learners to discuss their feelings about music they have chosen through questioning, e.g. 'Why are you drawn to this music?' 'Why is this music meaningful to you?'

Referring to the musical elements, ask learners to describe what they liked and disliked about the music they have listened to.

P2 - A2

Have some aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling of the expressive characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt and ask learners to discuss appropriate features, e.g. tempo, rhythm, range of melody, dynamics, in relation to the character of the music.



When teaching musical vocabulary it is important that the focus is on understanding the concept rather than simply recalling a word. Musical understanding must be developed for the terminology to be meaningful.

Perform pieces in different ways, e.g. with different tempi, dynamics and articulation. Ask learners to discuss the effect on the mood and character.



Playing to learners provides an immediate way of modelling, i.e. demonstrating musical ideas and techniques, as well as developing aural skills. Learners can also experiment with the effect that tempo has on the mood and character of music by using a tempo changing app, either using pre-recorded music or making their own recording for this purpose.

P2 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including aspects of articulation, phrasing and quality of tone

Play short rhythmic phrases from pieces to be learnt and ask learners to clap back the pulse and/or rhythm.



Other body percussion sounds can be substituted for clapping for variety. These activities also work well on instruments, e.g. performing the rhythm on one note.

Ask learners to identify note lengths aurally, e.g. crotchets and minims or quavers and crotchets.

In groups or whole classes, ask some learners to tap the pulse of simple phrases while others tap the rhythm. Different body percussion sounds can be used, e.g. stamping, tapping knees, clapping etc.

Help learners to sing/play short melodic phrases of pieces by ear, and to identify the differences either between half steps and whole steps or between different types of larger intervals.



A virtual keyboard can be a useful tool for exploring pitch and intervals with all instrumental and vocal learners. Some allow multiple learners to collaborate, such as the Shared Piano on Chrome Music Lab.

Perform pieces to learners and ask simple questions about the musical elements, including articulation, phrasing and quality of tone.

P2 - A4

Recognise and convey simple structures in their playing, e.g. repetition of rhythmic and melodic phrases

Ask learners questions on the phrasing and structure of pieces.



Recording instruments live using a digital audio workstation such as Audacity provides a way of splitting up and re-ordering phrases to further explore structure.

Improvise some rhythmic patterns with learners, perhaps related to the pieces being learnt.

Contrast long and short notes and link to a mood, occasion or story.



All musical activities, including improvisation, are interrelated and can therefore be taught simultaneously.

P2 - A5

Hear some elements of the music internally when using notation/symbol, e.g. tempo, pitch, rhythm, dynamics

Using notation, ask learners to work out the rhythm of phrases in their heads, then clap it.

Using notation, help learners to trace the contour of phrases, then compare it with the actual sound when played.

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say simple phrases at sight.



Music examples for all these activities can easily be created with online notation tools, such as Flat or Noteflight.

Using notation, perform pieces with some deliberate mistakes or deviations inserted. Ask learners to identify the differences.



This activity can be adapted to an aural one only, by asking learners to memorise the main melody and then asking them to identify any deviations.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 2

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P2 - B1

Posture and freedom of movement

- Maintain physical freedom and ease, without unnecessary tension:
 - across a comfortable range of the instrument
 - playing with a comfortable and balanced position which ensures flexibility when playing hands separately and together
 - developing free and confident movement, maintaining appropriate forearm, wrist and hand positions

Monitor learners as they set up instruments. Ensure they pay attention to health and safety issues and that instruments are set up at a suitable height and distance. Remind learners of the need for good practice.

Review learners' posture and forearm, wrist and hand positions, giving advice as appropriate. Ensure they use naturally curved fingers. Affirm good practice.



This is particularly important when learners move away from a closed five-note hand position.

P2 - B2

Registration

- Make creative and musically expressive choices by:
 - applying given registration directions and experimenting with alternatives where appropriate
 - using fills and accompaniment variations to highlight simple phrasing and structure
 - making simple changes of voice within a performance for expressive effect
 - using the volume control for creative dynamic effect

Encourage learners to practise setting up registration effectively and quickly, taking account of the auto-accompaniment, voice and tempo. Ask them to follow written instructions and to experiment with alternatives, discussing the musical effects.

Show learners how to use the syncro-start facility, pre-programmed intros and endings. Encourage them to begin using them as appropriate. Experiment with alternatives, including using start/stop for a simple, drum-only introduction, or playing an upbeat, unaccompanied introduction using syncro-start in the following bar.



Pre-programmed intros can be used very effectively but do not necessarily always provide the best start for pieces.

Demonstrate how fills can be used to highlight phrasing. Ask learners to explore where fills may be used in a familiar piece, marking in phrasing using slurs or otherwise indicating that a fill is to be used.

Show how auto-accompaniment variations can be used to highlight structure, e.g. a strophic verse-chorus pattern. Ask learners to identify and discuss the form of a familiar piece, exploring where auto-accompaniment variations can contribute to the listener's appreciation of the structure.



In the notation, show where auto-accompaniment variations are to be introduced and ended.

P2 - B3

Fingering and articulation

- Use appropriate fingering in closed and extended right-hand positions, including for scales and arpeggios
- Connect different hand positions by the passing of the thumb
- Use appropriate fingering for single-fingered and full-fingered left-hand chords
- Play three-fingered chords and understand the formation of major triads in root position, beginning to develop an awareness of inversions
- Play with legato and non-legato articulation, including slurring
- Define longer melodic phrases with guidance

Help learners to understand the importance of fingering in relation to phrasing and as an aid to memorisation. Demonstrate effective and ineffective fingering.

Play short musical phrases with learners, suggesting and using alternative fingerings. Discuss the effects on the phrasing, comparing and contrasting the effectiveness of fingering patterns.



This activity can be particularly effective in a group lesson, where learners can concentrate on listening to each others' playing.

Add or remove fingering from the notation in order to promote good habits, explaining choices made. Invite learners to contribute as their understanding develops.

Teach learners to play easy one-octave scales with the right hand, e.g. C major, G Mixolydian, D Dorian. Extend to two octaves, paying particular attention to fingering.

Introduce simple, well-known pieces that use an extended hand position, e.g. pentatonic. Demonstrate finger techniques before learners start learning the pieces.

Teach tunes in which the closed five-note position moves, e.g. Largo from the 'New World' Symphony.

Introduce learners to pieces that include thumb-under techniques.

Ensure that learners continue to explore the benefits of using the same or different fingers for each single-finger chord.

Teach learners to play arpeggios and broken chords, explaining the link between these and chords used in pieces.



The auto-accompaniment should not be engaged for this exercise.

Introduce chord progressions (one per bar), using single-finger and/or full-fingered chords in a variety of easy keys/modes related to the scales and pieces being studied. Ask learners to play these at a regular pulse, counting aloud at first, and then using the auto-accompaniment.

Ask learners to identify staccato or legato articulation and discuss how this affects the mood of the music. Make links between the voice used and suitable articulation. Encourage learners to explore articulations within pieces they are playing.



Some voices are only suited to legato or staccato playing, while others can suit a wide variety of articulations.

Demonstrate simple legato as a means to phrasing the right-hand melody, including ‘breaths’ between phrases. Encourage learners to explore phrasing and comment on the expressive effect.



It can be particularly helpful to link the musical principles of phrasing with singing activities, speech, and punctuation in written language.

P2 - B4

Coordination and rhythmic awareness

- Play with a secure pulse:
 - short pieces coordinating and integrating a right-hand melody and left-hand chords (single- and/or full-fingered), and including repeats of their own devising, e.g. an octave higher
 - keeping time with an auto-accompaniment and including simple changes of registration
 - listening to and controlling the balance between melody and accompaniment

Remind learners to work through a structured sequence of activities outlined in programme 1.

Show learners how to make necessary adjustments to accompaniment volume and/or touch response to gain a satisfactory balance between melody and auto-accompaniment.

Programme of Study 2

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P2 - C1

Improvise rhythmic and melodic phrases freely or within given structures, individually or as part of a group

Ask learners to improvise musical sounds and phrases freely in response to a picture or story.

Play and repeat an auto-accompaniment using an eight-bar chord pattern:

- asking learners to take turns improvising on a five-note (pentatonic) pattern, keeping time with the auto-accompaniment
- using fills to provide a cue for each learner's response
- extending the chord pattern to 12 bars
- explaining to learners that they must count carefully and follow the chord changes
- encouraging them to give their improvised solo a clear beginning and end

As learners gain confidence, encourage them to extend the range of the pentatonic pattern across two or more octaves.

As an extension, ask learners to create their own chord patterns, or build on melodic and rhythmic patterns taken from pieces being learnt.



Minor pentatonic patterns fit more comfortably under the hand than major ones, e.g:

- E minor pentatonic scale pattern: E/G/A/B/D
- suitable chords might be: Em/Em/A7/EmC/C/Am/B7

Ask learners to improvise modal/blues melodies using call and response, with increasing expectation of accuracy in terms of rhythm, dynamics and articulation.

Introduce a simple structure by asking learners to improvise a 'sandwich' rondo. Swap roles: teacher plays rondo and learner improvises episodes.

P2 - C2

Compose by developing musical ideas within simple given structures and applying instrumental skills

Show learners how to build on ideas from pieces and improvisations and develop individual or group compositions. Starting points can be musical devices, structures found in repertoire, e.g. ostinati/riffs, ABA patterns, pieces listened to, or literary or visual stimuli.



Whilst instrumental lessons are not a substitute for curriculum music, they do provide opportunities for learners to extend ideas that originate from classroom lessons. Instrumental teachers have particular expertise that helps learners to explore the technical and expressive potential of the instrument.

Develop learners' interest in composing melodies using various scale patterns introduced at this level, e.g. modes starting on A, G or C, pentatonic scales within simple structures. Discuss how the scale and the repetitions and contrasts affect the character of the music.

Ask learners to compose a 16-bar RH melody using a pentatonic pattern:

- adding chords to learners' pieces, discussing the possibilities, and encouraging them to choose between alternative progressions
- helping learners to learn to play the finished pieces (both hands), which can be performed to the rest of the group, and if possible a larger audience
- suggesting that they choose titles for their pieces, based on the character of the music

Encourage learners to evaluate their work during their lessons. Give specific feedback about musical details and help them to overcome particular problems.

Help learners to refine and notate their compositions, possibly using technology if appropriate.



Notation programs and digital audio workstations are useful tools to support the recording and refining process. Structural coherence and balance are more important than how many notes or bars a piece contains. What matters most, however, is that musical creativity becomes a habit – and one that learners enjoy.

Promote opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed alongside other pieces that they are learning.

Set activities over a number of weeks. These can be undertaken as part of learners' practice.

Programme of Study 2

D Playing music

P2 - D1

Work out by ear how to play short, easy well-known tunes or accompaniments using a limited range of notes

Show learners how to work out the notes and rhythms of simple, well-known pieces by ear and ask them to play them to others.

Ask learners to work out straightforward scale patterns and arpeggios by ear, giving them a suitable starting note.

P2 - D2

Repeat short, easy rhythmic and melodic phrases by playing back from memory

Play a simple piece and ask learners to recall the melody by humming or singing it. At this stage, melodies can include simple leaps, e.g. the notes of a tonic triad, but aim to keep the overall range within an octave.

Engage learners in more extended 'copycat' exercises, i.e. more notes, longer phrases, greater expressive detail.

P2 - D3

Play a variety of short, easy pieces from notation/symbols



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Building on the musical skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in Programme of Study 1, extend the range of pieces to be taught, ensuring that the chosen repertoire relates to the full range of learning

objectives.

Encourage learners to apply their own creative ideas, e.g. using ideas in the piece to generate their own improvisations or compositions.

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Continue to use the holistic approach to teaching and learning. Choose a wide range of repertoire that:

- consolidates and extends technical skills and knowledge
- uses simple key signatures
- possibly includes compound time
- includes a larger variety of rhythmic groupings
- includes a more extended pitch range

P2 - D4

Play from memory, and to others, selected contrasting pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to learn selected pieces from memory, showing them ways to remember the music, e.g. by identifying patterns, identifying the form, noting how passages are similar, or how they change, and devising mnemonics to remember sections such as endings.



Build up memorisation skills regularly and systematically so that learners gain confidence and are able to perform to others from memory.

P2 - D5

Read and play at sight short, easy pieces at a regular pulse, beginning to hear some of the elements internally and attending to expressive details, including articulation and dynamics



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Encourage learners to read short, simple passages/pieces at sight, making sure that they are well within their technical range.

Before playing through passages/pieces for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. time signature, key signature, accidentals, dynamics
- clap or tap rhythmic patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa
- note the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, intervals larger than a second
- sing/hum the larger intervals, having given them one of the two pitches



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Emphasise the importance of steady, fluent reading, i.e. maintaining a regular pulse, and of allowing mistakes to pass without hesitating.

Ask learners to play exercises/pieces again, this time including chords and staying in time with a simple auto-accompaniment.

Ask learners to sight-read in small groups (in unison) or in parts, one or two hands as appropriate.



Point out to learners that when first playing a piece of music from notation, they are always 'sight-reading' it. Sight-reading, therefore, should not be regarded as a separate activity, but rather as an integral part of learning new music.

Interpret music by making choices in relation to tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation, colour, etc. in order to achieve an intended effect and convey the expressive characteristics; describe and evaluate the music using appropriate musical vocabulary

When learning new pieces, encourage learners to make independent decisions about expressive features, such as dynamics, tempi, phrasing, articulation, and registration.

Show learners how to apply their listening skills and respond to the musical features of the music.

Tease out learners' understanding in questions about the music.

Encourage learners to perform the music intuitively and to explore different interpretations, even at a simple level.

Demonstrate alternatives for learners to discuss and evaluate.



Some learners interpret music intuitively, with little intervention from the teacher. Others need a more structured approach. All learners should be encouraged to analyse how they make their musical decisions.

Programme of Study 2

E Playing music with others

P2 - E1

Play with others, helping to maintain a separate part and showing awareness of their role within the ensemble

Ask learners to play a variety of ensemble pieces together, maintaining a regular pulse and listening to the other players.

Remind learners to sit/stand so that they can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to play different parts of a piece (with differentiated levels of difficulty) in turn, discovering which part is the most significant in any particular passage and noting how the parts fit together.

Encourage different learners to take a lead, perhaps by counting in, selecting the tempi or suggesting expressive contrasts.

Encourage learners to participate in an appropriate ensemble, playing in unison with others initially, later maintaining a separate part.



Regular ensemble experiences provide a focus for making music. Taking part in a group promotes quicker progression and increased motivation and helps learners to develop social and personal skills.

P2 - E2

Explore, discuss and convey the character of the music

Ask learners to discuss the character of the music and how this influences the choice of tempi, dynamics, etc.

Discuss with learners how further improvements can be made to their playing.

Programme of Study 2

F Performing and communicating

P2 - F1

Perform to others with a sense of occasion, e.g. in a concert, school assembly, examination, projecting the character of the music and acknowledging audience applause

Organise opportunities for performances with others of a similar standard in lessons, and occasionally for parents/carers, relatives and friends.



Performance enables learners to convey their music to others, building on a range of acquired skills, knowledge and understanding. Simulated performances in lessons help to develop these skills before playing to larger audiences.

Using their growing library of pieces, prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency and expression.



Allow plenty of time so that the music is thoroughly prepared. Learners should be well prepared for every performance so that it is a positive, enjoyable experience for everyone – performer(s) and audience.

Encourage learners to perform from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Fluency is key to developing confidence in performing. Pieces therefore need to be chosen with care to ensure that they are well within learners' capabilities.

Remind learners where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, ensure that stands are appropriately placed and at the correct height.

Show learners how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Refine pieces through simulated performances during instrumental lessons.



Aim to give understanding and meaning to the music. Stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P2 - F2

Evaluate the quality of their performance in relation to the character of the music, suggesting improvements and commenting on how the intentions were achieved

Lead learners in reflecting on and evaluating each performance. Help them to build confidence and make further improvements.

Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.



References to nerves can be counter-productive. If learners are thoroughly prepared, however, nerves can be viewed as an aid to concentration. Encourage a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

Encourage learners to revise pieces from their repertoire.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Programme of Study 3

A Listening and internalising

P3 - A1

Listen with attention to detail, responding to the expressive character of music, using their experiences to inform their playing

Ask learners to listen to music in a variety of styles and then describe the expressive character of the music with reference to the musical elements.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to point out similarities and differences.

P3 - A2

Develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character using appropriate vocabulary.

Ask learners to compare and contrast new pieces with pieces already known.

Perform pieces in different ways. Ask learners to describe how changes to the dynamics, articulation, phrasing, tone quality, etc. affect the expressive character of the music.



As their knowledge increases, learners are able to use a larger musical vocabulary.

P3 - A3

Recognise and discriminate between the musical elements, including more refined aspects of articulation, phrasing, quality/variety of tone

Play appropriate rhythms from pieces. Ask learners to clap them back and identify the note values.

In groups or whole classes ask some learners to tap the pulse of phrases while others tap the rhythm. As an extension, ask learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other, or the pulse with the feet and the rhythm with the hands.

Help learners to sing/play by ear short phrases from pieces to be learnt. Ask them to analyse some of the melodic intervals.



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Play phrases in major and minor keys, ending on the tonic, dominant or submediant. Ask learners to identify the mode of the music and the finishing note.

Perform pieces to learners and ask questions about the musical elements, including more detailed focus on articulation, phrasing and quality of tone.

P3 - A4

Recognise and convey structural features and compositional devices in their playing, e.g. A A B A, sequence

Ask learners to identify the main sections of more extended pieces. Ask further questions on rhythmic/melodic features, use of sequence, tonality, modulations, etc.

Ask learners to prepare short pieces using various compositional techniques as appropriate, e.g. glissandi, suitable scales or modes such as pentatonic or whole-tone, and describe their effect.

Encourage learners to improvise short pieces using similar techniques.

P3 - A5

Hear simple music internally when using notation/symbols, including repetitions, contrasts, changes to melodic and rhythmic patterns

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads:

- the rhythm of phrases
- the sound of melodies, e.g. hum/sing simple phrases and then compare with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the main characteristics of pieces to be learnt: refer to musical elements, articulation, phrasing, use of sequence, tonality, structure, expressive features, etc.

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say appropriate phrases at sight.

Using notation, perform pieces with a range of deliberate mistakes, e.g. rhythmic, melodic, dynamic. Ask learners to identify the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 3

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P3 - B1

Posture and freedom of movement

- Maintain physical freedom and ease, without unnecessary tension:
 - across a comfortable range of the instrument, with some awareness of posture and physiology
 - playing with a comfortable and balanced position which ensures flexibility when playing hands separately and together
 - playing with free and confident movement
 - playing with economy of movement when tackling more demanding passages

Check that instruments are set up correctly, taking account of posture and forearm, wrist and hand positions.



Ensure that learners are comfortable and are able to move both hands freely across a wider range of the instrument.

Ensure that learners continue to play with naturally curved fingers.

P3 - B2

Registration

- Make creative and musically expressive choices by:
 - applying given registration directions, experimenting with appropriate alternatives, and making some autonomous decisions
 - making use of dual voices, simple voice effects, and changing the voice within a performance for expressive effect
 - using the volume control for creative dynamic effect

Help learners to set up registration effectively and quickly, following written instructions. Experiment with alternatives, including voice effects, discussing suitability.



Voice effects could include chorus, auto-harmony and reverb. Devise aural tests to establish whether learners can detect whether dual voices are engaged.

Ask learners to play a piece and repeat with a dual voice engaged, noting the musical difference.

Ask learners to contrast two or more voices within a piece for structural effect. Compare with auto-accompaniment variations.



When learners can change voices fluently, they can experiment using different voices for alternate phrases to create a conversational effect.

Encourage learners to explore the use of one-touch settings where available, and demonstrate the advantages.

Show learners how to use the transpose function for structural effect and musical purpose when arranging pieces. Ask them to use this function in a selected piece.



This is a useful function when playing with friends who use transposing instruments, e.g. clarinet players.

Show learners how to use the volume control to fade in and out the auto-accompaniment as an alternative to using pre-set intros and endings.



This activity can also be introduced during an earlier programme. Here it provides a good introduction to the use of the volume control for dynamic effect. The use of the volume control is important in an ensemble context, where players must listen sensitively and adjust their own volume in relation to others, e.g. to bring out the solo part.

Ask learners to compose a piece using only the black keys and a variety of articulations. Encourage them to use the volume controls as a means to fade in/out of the overall mix. Discuss how this influences the texture and the overall effectiveness of the composition.

Fingering and articulation

- Recognise and use consistent fingering, beginning to suggest fingering for short, simple phrases that is suitable for their hand shape
- Use appropriate fingering in closed and extended hand positions, including for scales and arpeggios
- Connect hand positions with fluency
- Use appropriate fingerings for left-hand full-fingered chords
- Play a range of chords including major and minor triads and (dominant) seventh chords, both in root position and using suitable inversions
- Play with legato and non-legato articulation, including slurring and staccato
- Begin to explore how touch response can enable phrases to be shaped with dynamic variety

Teach learners to play short phrases using alternative fingerings. Encourage them to listen to the effects on phrasing, comparing the effectiveness of each fingering pattern. Ask learners to suggest fingering for short phrases, explaining their choices.

Teach learners to play scales and arpeggios with a range of two octaves in a wider range of keys, e.g. G, D, A and F majors, A, D, and E minors, related modal and major/minor pentatonic scales.



Scale work should relate to developing awareness of key and tonality in pieces being studied. Learners should begin to differentiate aurally between major, minor, pentatonic and some modal and blues patterns.

Play a simple chord progression and ask learners to play scales in time with the auto-accompaniment. In group lessons, learners can start on different beats of the bar to create scales in thirds, etc.

Teach learners exercises and pieces that use the finger patterns and thumb-under techniques previously encountered in scales/arpeggios in related keys.

Ask learners to compare fingering used in arpeggio and broken-chord patterns with that used for left-hand, full-fingered chords. Discuss reasons why some chord fingerings are more comfortable than others. Help learners to develop consistency in their choice of chord positions and fingerings.



Learners should understand the formation of common triads in their root positions so as to make accurate and musical connections between what is played and what is actually heard.

Play three chords – one major, one minor, and one a seventh chord. Ask learners to identify each one aurally.



Learners often use the keyboard screen to confirm that they have played the correct chord (if this is displayed), but they should be encouraged to develop their aural recognition first and foremost.

Introduce and explain chord charts, emphasising the correct theoretical construction of chords and their inversions. Ask learners to work out new chords (major and minor triads) by applying their aural recognition, knowledge gained from chord charts and theoretical understanding.

Ask learners to play chord progressions (one per bar) using full-fingered chords in a variety of keys at a regular pulse, counting aloud at first, and then using the auto-accompaniment.

Explain possible single-finger shortcuts as alternatives to full-fingered chords, e.g. minors, sevenths. Ask learners to experiment.



Some keyboards allow players to use a mixture of single-finger and full-fingered chords without changing settings. This can be a useful performance tool.

Ask learners to experiment with a variety of articulations within pieces they are playing, giving reasons for their final choices in relation to the notation, registration and character of the music.

Play a recording of a popular song, if possible providing a simple written score. Ask learners to note how the lyrics and music together define the phrasing; then ask them to copy the phrasing heard on to the sung version.



Where appropriate, it can be beneficial to encourage the player or the rest of the group to sing the song as it is played.

Through experimenting with alternatives, ask learners to suggest and add phrasing to notation, e.g. defining two- or four-bar phrasing.



Phrasing of the right-hand melody should be underpinned by the use of fills to define phrasing within the auto-accompaniment.

Ask learners to engage and explore the touch response. Initially, ask them to play exercises in a five-note position. Explain the connection between finger action and velocity control. Demonstrate how touch responsiveness sometimes affects changes of timbre as well as dynamics.



Touch response on electronic keyboards requires a different technical approach from the weighted keys of an acoustic piano. It is usually based solely on velocity, requiring a firm finger technique rather than arm or elbow movement.

Ask learners to use touch response when playing scales, listening to evenness and discussing the relative strength of fingers, finger patterns and fluency.

P3 - B4

Coordination and rhythmic awareness

- Play with a secure pulse:
 - coordinating and integrating a right-hand melody and left-hand full-fingered chords
 - keeping time with an auto-accompaniment and including varied changes of registration
 - listening to and controlling the balance between melody and accompaniment

Devise suitable exercises for learners to develop their two-hand coordination skills.



Emphasise the importance of practising the tune and chords without auto-accompaniment.

Ask learners to play a pattern of chords (one per bar) adding fills, auto-accompaniment, voice and other registration changes between each four-bar phrase.



This activity is an effective extension to the previous activity, the emphasis now being on coordinating changes of registration.

Encourage learners to include in their pieces spontaneous changes of registration, including using one-touch settings where available.



Registration changes are an important element of musical keyboard playing.

Programme of Study 3

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P3 - C1

Improvise in a variety of genres and styles, sustaining and developing musical ideas and achieving different intended musical effects with the instrument

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles, e.g. rags, marches, folk-songs; draw on relevant musical devices from pieces being learnt, where appropriate
- by varying a theme, exploring contrasts of elements, e.g. pitch, rhythm, tonality, dynamics
- using a free theme based on the mood or character of a piece, e.g. sense of autumn, clouds, jollity, sadness, open space, speed, night time



Improvisation provides opportunities for learners to extend their own musical ideas within the context of what they have learned. As instrumental skills and knowledge develop, so should fluency in improvisation. Improvisation enables musicians to gain a deeper insight into musical styles as well as encouraging them to express their own feelings. It should, above all, be an enjoyable activity, undertaken in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere, with the teacher joining in.

Give learners pentatonic patterns on which to improvise within a piece, using the existing chord structure and keeping in time with the auto-accompaniment. Encourage all the players in an ensemble piece to contribute improvised sections in an extended arrangement.

Repeat this in a range of pieces, allowing improvisation to become established as a normal part of interpretation. Explain to learners that they must keep track of the chord changes and bars in order to contribute effectively to the structure and overall performance.

As learners gain confidence, encourage them to include melodic and/or rhythmic references to the original melody of the piece, moving beyond any fixed pentatonic pattern.

Discuss the results of the improvisations with learners, perhaps considering the appropriateness of style, development of ideas, use of musical elements, structure and overall outcome.

Suggest and demonstrate further ways of developing and refining ideas, whilst building up learners' confidence.

Make a recording, if possible.



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P3 - C2

Apply knowledge and understanding of the instrument in order to compose with an understanding of musical idiom

Ask learners to compose short pieces of music for their own (and perhaps other) instruments, developing the work in Programme of Study 2.



Notation is likely to be used as a memory aid, first in shorthand (or graphic form) and then for performance. Some learners may be composing for GCSE/Nationals/BTEC/RSL or other qualifications. There are many natural ways in which instrumental teachers can liaise with classroom colleagues for mutual support.

Ask learners to create a multi-layered piece by using technology to create a beat then adding an instrumental part over the top.



This can be done using on-board features or an online tool such as Song Maker on Chrome Music Lab.

Encourage learners to use a range of musical devices appropriate to their technical and musical understanding, e.g. repetition, sequence, contrast.

Ask learners to compose within a given structure, e.g. to compose or complete a melody with a given 16-bar chord progression. Suggest suitable pentatonic or other scale patterns. Explain the importance of matching melody with harmony, and draw attention to the importance of dissonance and resolution.

Literary, visual or emotional starting points can be used, but the process of composing should focus on how

effectively the musical ideas are developed within the genre.

Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style, discussing their progress and suggesting ideas for improvement and development.



Some programs allow learners to share their compositions digitally with other learners, with the facility for learners to comment on each other's work. Ensure that you adhere to your organisation's safeguarding policy with regards to the use of online platforms.

Help them to write their pieces using notation.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions, perhaps involving other musicians.

Programme of Study 3

D Playing music

P3 - D1

Work out by ear how to play tunes or accompaniments in straightforward keys or modes

Ask learners to work out by ear familiar tunes that are more challenging, e.g. longer, larger range, perhaps including some chromatic notes.

Playing by ear, introduce learners to different modes, scales, blues patterns, hand positions etc. Ask them to experiment with various starting notes and to work out the key, structure, etc.



Sustain opportunities for playing by ear – it brings together many skills.

P3 - D2

Repeat moderately short musical phrases (melodic and rhythmic) from memory

Ask learners to repeat moderately short phrases, of appropriate difficulty, performed by the teacher or other learners. Include music with a variety of time signatures, including compound time, 'swing quavers' and tunes with a wider range.

Ask learners to clap/tap the pulse while the phrases are being played and possibly identify some musical features.

Play scales in canon, e.g. the teacher or a learner starts, other learners begin two notes later – playing in consecutive thirds.

Extend a call-and-response sequence, repeating phrases or improvising new ones, always aiming for a musical performance.

P3 - D3

Play a variety of moderately easy pieces from different styles and traditions



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Approach new pieces from different angles – perhaps aurally, or through improvisation, listening, notation, etc.

Ask learners to identify challenging passages and to make suggestions for solving problems.

Building on their own suggestions (if appropriate), show learners how to practise challenging passages and make improvements.

Make the process as creative as possible, always aiming to prompt learners' imagination and curiosity.



Continue to use the holistic approach, aiming for simultaneous learning through interrelated activities and processes.



Choose a wide range of repertoire that builds on learners' technique, musical understanding and creativity. Ensure that it is relevant to their stage of development and interests.

P3 - D4

Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire of increasing length and complexity

Building on strategies suggested in Programme of Study 2, help learners to commit selected pieces to memory.

Once pieces are memorised, encourage learners to try them out in front of others.

Discuss problems and possible solutions in respect of playing from memory.

Provide opportunities for learners to play from memory in a group. Note any new perspectives that this brings, e.g. the opportunity to listen more acutely and to pick up visual cues more easily.



Aim to develop musical memory in a number of ways, e.g. automatic, aural, visual, cognitive, kinaesthetic. Remind learners that a performance is secure when it is learnt thoroughly from memory, but they should guard against it becoming mechanical. Beware of the tendency to increase the speed of the beat as pieces become more familiar.

P3 - D5

Read and play at sight a variety of short, straightforward pieces at a regular pulse, using an increasing rhythmic, melodic and tonal range



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play at sight music that is well within their technical range and in familiar keys or modes.



Sight-reading can always be connected to learning repertoire because the skills are applied when reading pieces for the first time. Promote enjoyment and confidence by using metaphors to describe phrases and discussing the character of the music and the intended effect.

Extend the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 2. Thus, before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to hear in their heads the overall sound of the music by asking them to:

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. tempo, time signature, key signature, accidentals
- note articulation, phrasing and dynamics
- clap or tap rhythmic patterns, perhaps including syncopated patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa (and extend by challenging learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other)
- notice the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, a range of intervals
- sing/hum a variety of intervals taken from the melodic line
- sing/hum the melodic line of appropriate phrases



There are many online tools for practising interval recognition, such as Teoria.

Ask learners to repeat exercises/pieces using the auto-accompaniment, playing full-fingered chords with the left hand. Include instruction for the registration learners are to use.



Exercises used can be transposed into other easy keys, reinforcing the recognition of intervals and the shape of the melody.

Ask learners to sight-read in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of keeping going and maintaining a regular pulse.

P3 - D6

Interpret music with an understanding of the musical style, structure and idiom; communicate the character of the music and the intentions of the composer, making improvements to their work in the light of their knowledge about the music

Discuss interpretative ideas with learners as pieces are being learned. Build on an intuitive response to the music.

Encourage learners to think about the nature of performance and how they can communicate musical ideas to others. Particular strategies may include:

- listening to different interpretations of music being learnt and discussing the effects, e.g. by the teacher demonstrating and/or the use of recordings
- analysing the structure of music being learnt and the implications for communicating this in performance
- discussing mood, meaning and emotions
- making links between technique and interpretation
- emphasising expressive features



Interpretation is not a separate activity. Learners should be encouraged to make interpretative decisions in all their playing, even when learning the notes. Considerations of interpretation often inform the way passages are learnt, e.g. in relation to phrasing, fingering, articulation, tempo.

Programme of Study 3

E Playing music with others

P3 - E1

Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble and leading the ensemble where appropriate

Increase the frequency and range of ensemble experiences. These could include both instruments and voices.

Ask learners to consider the best layout for particular ensembles, ensuring that all participants can clearly watch the leader or conductor.

Ask learners to maintain a separate part individually.



Help learners to learn their parts for new ensemble pieces by providing time in lessons.

Encourage learners to develop their listening skills, e.g. awareness of ensemble, balance, tuning, when playing with others.



Aim to extend and develop the necessary listening skills for playing with others.

Encourage learners to lead the ensemble, e.g. by counting in.

P3 - E2

Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. tempo, ensemble, tuning, balance, conveying the character of the music

Promote more musical independence by encouraging learners to take the lead and make decisions relating

to the character of the music.

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate their progress and discuss ways of making further improvements.



Adopt a creative, problem-solving approach which gives learners the responsibility for overcoming the challenges of playing with others.

Programme of Study 3

F Performing and communicating

P3 - F1

Perform to others with increasing awareness and assurance, communicating the character of the music and their musical intentions to the audience

Organise opportunities for performance with others of a similar standard at various occasions and venues.



To promote self-confidence, help learners to develop their own library of repertoire pieces, i.e. pieces which once learned and performed can be repeated.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a variety of styles.



Ensure that learners perform music from different styles and genres so that confidence and experience can be developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners so that they are able to perform with fluency, expression and understanding.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.



Encourage learners to retain pieces that they can perform at short notice, i.e. to build up an internalised music library.

Make sure that learners know where and how to stand or sit to perform. If notation is used, check the position and height of stands.

Ensure that learners know how to respond to applause and walk on and off stage.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.



Aim to stimulate creative thinking when preparing for performance. Encourage learners to consider different ways of communicating the character of the music.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P3 - F2

Evaluate with perception and some independence the quality of their performance and respond to ideas from others

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

Organise opportunities for learners to join and perform with directed groups, e.g. bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, ensuring that their musical needs and stage of development are sensitively taken into account.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Programme of Study 4

A Listening and internalising

P4 - A1

Use their listening skills and experiences of a variety of musical styles and traditions to inform their interpretations, e.g. use of rubato, shaping of phrases, variety of tone

Ask learners to listen to a variety of music from different styles and traditions, using more extended and complex structures. Ask them to describe the expressive character of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, etc. and noting how composers and performers use repetition and contrast.



Apps such as GarageBand, Soundtrap and BandLab provide lots of opportunity to learn about structure by exploring sections, repetition and looping.

Ask learners to listen to music that is similar in period, genre, etc. to pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare pieces using appropriate vocabulary.



Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with GCSE/Nationals/BTEC Level 2/RSL Level 2 or other qualifications.

P4 - A2

Further develop their aural perception of the music to be played, including some feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic characteristics

Perform pieces to be learnt. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music, referring to the musical elements, phrasing, articulation, tonality, etc.

With learners, compare performances of the same piece, looking at shaping of phrases, articulation, use of

rubato, quality/variety of tone, etc.

P4 - A3

Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, e.g. tempo, articulation, phrasing

Help learners to sing/play by ear appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt, e.g. irregular phrases, melodies containing chromatic notes/embellishments.

Enable learners to discuss and explore the harmonic context of melodies that they play.

When playing with others, ask learners to note the differences between homophonic and contrapuntal passages.



Whenever possible, use ensemble opportunities to explore different textures.

Encourage learners to think about and experiment with alternatives in tempi, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc., listening to the effect and deciding which approach meets the musical intentions most successfully.



The emphasis is on intuition, imagination and curiosity.

P4 - A4

Recognise and convey more extended structures and techniques in pieces being studied, e.g. rondo, raga, dance forms, simple modulations

Discuss new repertoire with learners, listening to structure, compositional devices, tonality and melodic lines in order to promote better aural perception.

Discuss the roles of solo and accompaniment in pieces being learnt.

Use an element of a piece as the starting point for a short improvisation.



When appropriate, ensure that learners are thoroughly familiar with accompaniments. If these are instrumental reductions, take the opportunity to listen to the full version.

P4 - A5

Hear simple music internally with increasing accuracy and fluency when using notation/symbols

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of phrases, then compare with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to style, structure, phrasing, dynamic range, texture, etc. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

Using notation, perform extracts with deliberate deviations in rhythm, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc. inserted. Ask learners to point out the mistakes.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 4

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P4 - B1

Posture and freedom of movement

- Maintain physical freedom and ease, without unnecessary tension:
 - across a larger range of the instrument, indicating awareness of the whole body as a balanced playing mechanism
 - playing with a comfortable and balanced position which ensures flexibility when playing hands separately and together
 - playing with free and confident movement
 - playing with economy of movement when tackling fast scale passages, wider intervals, widely spaced textures, etc.

Check learners' posture and forearm, wrist and hand positions. Affirm and encourage good practice.

Demonstrate to learners the difference between positive and negative body language when performing.



Encourage learners to attend live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

Use role-play to discuss the effects of good posture in communicating an effective performance.

P4 - B2

Registration

- Make creative and musically expressive choices by:
 - choosing suitable registration with stylistic awareness, including programming and using registration memories where the instrument allows
 - adjusting or reprogramming the instrument's resources as appropriate, e.g. digital effects, reprogramming dual voices where the instrument allows

Explain and demonstrate the use of registration memories as a quick and effective way of accessing more complex changes of registration. Ask learners to practise storing a series of four registrations, using one

auto-accompaniment but with subtle alterations.



Learners should be encouraged to learn about the technological aspects of using their instruments by studying the accompanying manual. Where necessary, time should be spent explaining this to them, ensuring that they understand the language and develop the ability to process the information.

Teach learners to store their work.

Encourage learners to explore alternatives to the pre-set dual-voice settings, adjusting volume levels, octave settings and pan effects on both the main and dual voice. Discuss the musical effects of different combinations of sounds and save the most satisfying.

Show learners how to make changes to the 'orchestration' of the auto-accompaniment, including adding and removing parts, altering voicings within the orchestration and remixing. Invite them to experiment.



Where an auto-accompaniment is used within an ensemble it may be necessary to reduce the orchestration in order to achieve clarity of texture.

Ask learners to experiment by copying the exact orchestration setting across from one style to a completely different one. Discuss the extent to which this alters the effect of the music.

Ask learners to devise their own intros and endings to pieces by building up and phasing in or out the orchestration as appropriate.

Fingering and articulation

- Observe and adhere to chosen fingering, suggesting fingering for short phrases
- Use some finger substitution
- Use standard fingering in a variety of closed and extended hand positions in a wide range of scales and arpeggios
- Connect hand positions with fluency and confidence at a variety of tempi
- Use a range of appropriate fingerings for left-hand full-fingered chords
- Play a range of chords including major and minor triads, (dominant) seventh and augmented chords, both in root position and using suitable inversions
- Play with some variety of legato and non-legato articulation at a variety of tempi
- Shape and define phrases with autonomy, including dynamic control

Ask learners to suggest, and write in, fingering for phrases, including an independent left-hand part. Give guidance and, where possible, make links with finger patterns previously used, e.g. in scales and arpeggios.

Demonstrate finger substitution in appropriate passages, and ask learners to copy.

Teach learners to play a wide range of scales and arpeggios hands together, using conventional and consistent fingerings, legato and staccato.

Explain and explore the extent to which different scale patterns, e.g. blues, modal, affect the character of the music.



Learners should understand, and be able to play, a wide range of major, minor, modal and blues scales. They should be able to work out pentatonic scales in all major/minor keys and understand the relationship between relative major and minor keys, pentatonic and blues equivalents.



Playing scales in contrary motion can be particularly useful in drawing learners' attention to the key and location of sharps and flats.

Teach learners to practise scales hands separately and then together, developing independence, dexterity and strength. Adapt to using the touch response.

Encourage learners to work out chords on the basis of scales, arpeggios, intervals, etc., consulting chord charts as necessary and explaining the theory behind common chord extensions.

With learners, explore a wider usage of inversions when changing from one full-fingered chord to another. Suggest suitable fingerings for each inversion, relating them to arpeggio/broken-chord patterns (including dominant, diminished and minor seventh chords). Explain that the ability to play full-fingered chords in different inversions is important when rapid chord changes are needed.



The keyboard remains set to recognise the root position chord irrespective of the inversion played, provided all the necessary notes of the chord are played on keys set below the split-point range. It remains important, however, that learners understand and can play chords in their root position.

Teach exercises and pieces that use finger patterns and techniques previously encountered in scales/arpeggios, e.g. a wide range of hand-position changes, jumps and octave stretches.

Introduce exercises, or use familiar repertoire, to help learners to develop independence between fingers within one hand, e.g. legato with fingers 4 and 5, staccato with others.

Devise suitable chord progressions so that learners can play right-hand scales in time with an auto-accompaniment. As a group, learners can start on different beats of the bar to create scales in thirds, etc., taking turns to play the auto-accompaniment.

Ask learners to identify chords including a variety of extensions, e.g. sixths, sevenths.



Ensure that the instrument correctly identifies major sixth/minor seventh chords, as some keyboards confuse these. When in root position, however, they are generally correctly recognised.

Explain the varieties of notations used for chords, e.g. $C\Delta = Cmaj7 = CM7$.

Ask learners to play chord progressions using full-fingered chords in a variety of keys/modes at a regular pulse and with the auto-accompaniment.

Teach pieces with an independent left-hand part written in the bass clef, including arrangements of contemporary popular songs, jazz standards and adaptations of well-known classics.



Playing pieces on an acoustic piano provides valuable breadth to the activities in this programme.

Encourage learners to explore the use of unconventional timbres as a means of enhancing or altering the mood and character of piano pieces adapted for keyboard performance.



Some pieces can be effectively interpreted using two voices in 'split' mode. This depends on the placement of the split point. One or both voices may need to be transposed by an octave.

Encourage learners to experiment with a variety of articulations within pieces, giving reasons for their choices in relation to the notation, the character of the piece, the choice of registration, etc.



The use of dual voices and digital effects can affect articulation. This should be demonstrated and discussed with learners.

Invite learners to suggest phrasing in pieces. Discuss the use of articulation to define phrasing and encourage experimentation with alternatives, e.g. some irregular phrase lengths. Demonstrate a variety of dynamics within the phrase, and ask learners to experiment, taking advantage of the touch response.



Where irregular phrase lengths are used it is helpful to include fills to underline phrasing in the auto-accompaniment, as most styles assume four-bar phrases.

P4 - B4

Coordination and rhythmic awareness

- Play with rhythmic control and security:
 - coordinating and integrating a complex right-hand melody and a wide range of left-hand full-fingered chords
 - keeping time with an auto-accompaniment and including frequent and varied changes of registration
 - listening to and controlling the balance between melody, accompaniment and parts

Help learners to evaluate the balance between right- and left-hand voicings when playing pieces with an independent left-hand part.

Ask learners to make arrangements of pieces, repeating the material as necessary. Changes of registration should be incorporated spontaneously, using one-touch settings and learners' own pre-set registration memories. Encourage them to add harmony notes and include some improvisation.

Teach simple left-hand vamps, e.g. boogie, jazz, rock. Provide suitable exercises to help learners develop the ability to maintain rhythmic momentum against syncopated or cross-rhythmic right-hand melodies/riffs.



This activity may use chord notation but should not use the auto-accompaniment.

Programme of Study 4

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P4 - C1

Improvise with freedom in a wide range of musical structures, genres, styles and traditions, drawing on internalised sounds

Ask learners to improvise with others by embellishing a melody, e.g. the pentatonic

Raga Bhupali:



Research less-familiar musics from around the world and make links with curriculum music where appropriate.

Demonstrate the effectiveness of including improvised sections within existing pieces that learners are playing.

Ask learners to improvise using the existing chord structure and keeping in time with the auto-accompaniment.

Help learners to work out suitable pentatonic and other scale patterns that take account of stylistic considerations and the underlying chord progression.

Encourage learners to embellish the melody as a starting point for improvising.

Make recordings of improvisations and discuss the outcomes with learners, including the development of ideas, use of musical elements, structure and stylistic suitability.



The best improvisations have a coherent, well-phrased, vocal quality. Singing the ideas before trying to play them provides learners with an internal template. This allows their improvisations to be head-led not finger-led and will help prevent them from getting musically 'stuck'.



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P4 - C2

Compose in different styles, creating and selecting musical ideas by exploring the characteristics of their chosen resources

Ask learners to compose some pieces over an extended period of time in a variety of traditional and contemporary styles. This could include:

- two contrasting pieces involving melody and chord symbols, incorporating rhythmic ideas derived from the auto-accompaniment
- a short piece for an ensemble, exploring aspects of textures, solos and accompaniments
- a solo piece without auto-accompaniment, possibly evoking moods or feelings, e.g. clouds, pyramids, the evening, rush hour, dreams



Ensure that time is allowed for reviewing progress of compositions. It may be appropriate to select particular times of the year when it is possible to focus more on composing, e.g. in the summer term after examinations. Group compositions can be useful for developing ensemble skills.

Help learners to refine their pieces within the chosen style and idiom.



Rehearsing, interpreting and performing the compositions are essential parts of this process.

Programme of Study 4

D Playing music

P4 - D1

Work out by ear how to play moderately easy tunes or accompaniments, e.g. with a wider range of intervals and different octaves/positions

Ask learners to play by ear familiar tunes that include some simple chromatic writing and modulations.

Discuss the effect of accidentals and what needs to be done in order to modulate from one key to another.

Encourage learners to work out some of the underlying harmonies. Discuss possible alternatives. Explain that chromatic writing may be decorative and therefore does not require harmonisation.

Ask learners to vary tunes by using alternative melodic and/or rhythmic patterns. Discuss the variations.

Improvise on the given tune and extend the piece for fun.



Regular playing by ear helps to build confidence. Familiar tunes can be worked out during individual practice and then played again in the lesson.

P4 - D2

Repeat phrases of a moderate length and complexity in a variety of styles

Develop further call-and-response or echo exercises, perhaps using more challenging keys and a wider variety of styles and forms, e.g. waltz, Latin-American rhythms, riffs.

Play scales in canon, e.g. one learner starts, the next begins two notes later, the third a further two notes on, thus producing a sequence of chords. Discuss whether the chords are major, minor, diminished, etc.

Play arpeggios in canon, learners starting on successive notes. Discuss whether the resulting chords are in root position, first inversion, etc.

Play simple pieces in canon, with either the teacher or other members of the group leading. The second group repeats the part played by the first group.

Continue the activity in pairs, with the second player decorating the line or improvising answering phrases in the style of the first. Whole pieces can be built up in this manner.

P4 - D3

Play a variety of pieces of moderate difficulty



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

When learners are learning new pieces, ask them to identify and discuss structural relationships, e.g. repetitions, contrasts, deviations, developments. Ask them to describe the musical effects of these features.

Encourage learners to learn pieces more independently, identifying and solving problems, and making musical decisions.

Continue to advise learners on practising strategies.

Encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.



As learners develop their own responses to pieces, so the teacher's input can be reduced.



Encourage learners to use the holistic approach by prompting them to apply listening skills, solve technical and musical problems and use their imaginations.

P4 - D4

Memorise a variety of pieces from their repertoire in different styles and traditions, featuring a range of musical devices and structures

Encourage learners to read the score away from the instrument, as another way to help with memorising pieces.

Ask learners to memorise short pieces or sections of music this way, then play them without using the music.



This is a challenging activity that depends on internalising the music, making links to notation and memorising patterns and structures.



As an aid to memorisation, ask learners to imagine playing the piece with their eyes closed, including all performance details.



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.

P4 - D5

Read and play at sight moderately easy pieces in different styles at a regular pulse; internalise and incorporate less-familiar musical features, e.g. time signatures, variety of tempi, keys



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Continue to develop sight-reading skills by regularly asking learners to play appropriate music at sight, using the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 3, i.e. before playing through pieces for the first time, help learners to gain a clear internal picture of the overall shape and character of the music.

Include an increasing range of full-fingered chords, instructions for changes of registration and independent left-hand parts using bass clef notation.



Sight-reading at this level may include dotted, swung and/or syncopated rhythms, contrasting articulations, auto-accompaniment fills, phrasing, etc.

Ask learners to sight-read appropriate music in small groups, each learner maintaining a separate part individually (the parts possibly having differentiated levels of difficulty). Emphasise the importance of learners listening to each other in respect of ensemble, tuning, balance, etc.



Use a wide range of styles from different times and places.



As in previous programmes, sight-reading should have fluent, musical outcomes. Attention to rhythmic accuracy and expression will help to project the music.

P4 - D6

Interpret music with understanding and insight, developing a personal response through sustained study of and reflection on the music, applying their knowledge of style, characteristics and historical/social background; evaluate how their interpretation reflects the context in which the music was created and is performed and heard

Building on Programme of Study 3, discuss the interpretation of pieces being studied, especially how learners can convey their own personal responses within the stylistic conventions and the composer's markings.

Encourage learners to be aware of stylistic, structural and idiomatic features of pieces, e.g. musical forms, repetition, contrast, development techniques, and to communicate their feelings and understanding in their playing.



Developing an interpretation is the crux of a personal performance and should be the focus of discussion. Listening to various recordings of the same piece can stimulate discussion and provide a way to develop learners' interpretations.

Programme of Study 4

E Playing music with others

P4 - E1

Play with others, independently maintaining an individual part with sensitivity, responding to others and leading where appropriate, demonstrating awareness of their role within the ensemble

Encourage more independence by promoting unsupervised rehearsals and by asking learners to take the lead.

Encourage learners to use eye contact when playing in small ensembles.

Discuss ways of using rehearsal time effectively, e.g. marking scores and parts, tuning procedures, dealing with challenging passages.

Encourage learners, through careful listening, to develop greater sensitivity in respect of balance, ensemble, tuning, shaping of phrases, etc.

Encourage learners to be responsive in situations where an ensemble performance is not together, taking action to get the performance back on track.

Ensure there are a variety of opportunities for ensembles/groups to perform to audiences and to each other.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

Contribute to collective decisions, e.g. balance, ensemble, interpretation, conveying the character and style of the music

Encourage all learners to contribute to discussions on interpretative issues, e.g. communicating and projecting the style and character of the music.

Invite learners to discuss, using appropriate vocabulary, how further refinements can be made.

Programme of Study 4

F Performing and communicating

P4 - F1

Perform to others with growing confidence, responding to the audience, venue and occasion, communicating the character and style of the music through their own/shared interpretation

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



Aim to give learners a range of performing experiences, e.g. solo, with others, directed, non-directed.

Ask learners to perform, over time, pieces from a range of musical styles and traditions.



Ensure that learners perform music from a range of musical styles and genres so that confidence and experience is developed across a range of repertoire.

Prepare learners to perform with fluency and understanding, encouraging them to communicate their personal feelings within the style of the music and the composer's markings.



Through performance, learners demonstrate their ability to absorb a range of musical and technical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Ask learners to research some background information on pieces, e.g. details of style, the historical/social context.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence, musical awareness and communication.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons, during performances at school and as part of concerts to the wider community.



Aim to stimulate creative thinking in preparing for performance. Learners should explore a range of possibilities in their quest to communicate the expressive intentions of the composer.

Encourage learners to perform music with others independently of the teacher, e.g. duets or small ensembles.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. It is important to look out for signs of performance anxiety and support learners in developing strategies to address this. Learners should be encouraged to have a sense of anticipation and enjoyment about performing.

P4 - F2

Evaluate with perception the quality of their performance, using their knowledge of performing conventions, including the performances of distinguished musicians

Ask learners to reflect on and evaluate each performance in order to make further improvements and build up confidence.

Encourage learners to devise their own criteria for self-assessment.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Organise opportunities for learners to perform with directed groups by encouraging them to join bands, orchestras, choirs, large ensembles, etc. that are appropriate to their needs.

Programme of Study 5

A Listening and internalising

P5 - A1

Listen systematically and critically to a wide variety of music from different styles and traditions to develop their own independent interpretations

Ask learners to listen to and identify music from a variety of styles and traditions, including extended pieces with complex structures. Ask them to compare and contrast various pieces, referring to form, texture, harmonic language, instrumentation, tonality, etc.

Ask learners to listen to music that is related in style and tradition to the pieces they are learning. Ask them to compare and contrast the range of musical ideas/devices and observe how they are used in the music.



It is important for learners to be challenged by a range of relevant questions. Use a framework of open and closed questions that lead learners step by step.



These activities may link with A Level/Highers/BTEC Level 3/RSL Level 3 or other qualifications.

P5 - A2

Have a clear aural perception of the music to be played, conveying their feeling and understanding of the expressive and stylistic features in practice and performance

Perform pieces to be learnt and/or listen to recorded/live performances. Ask learners to describe the overall character and style of the music.

Ask learners to compare the performances, noting subtleties of tempo, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, quality/variety of tone, etc.

P5 - A3

Identify and incorporate subtle changes to the musical elements in their playing, interpreting music both personally and idiomatically

Help learners to sing/play by ear more extended and/or complex phrases, e.g. those featuring wider leaps and/or challenging rhythms, from pieces to be learnt. Look at how these phrases fit into the whole piece.

Ask learners to explore the effects of varying the registration, voicings, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc. in pieces from different styles and traditions. Encourage them to develop personal interpretations and to use their understanding of the characteristics of the instrument.

Discuss the musical effects of more advanced technical devices, e.g. finger substitution, and ask learners to experiment with different ways of using them in pieces being studied.

Encourage learners to ensure consistency of tempo in extended pieces and large-scale movements.

P5 - A4

Recognise and convey in their interpretative decisions a wide variety of musical structures and compositional techniques

Discuss new repertoire with learners, noting structure, tonality, modulations, technically demanding passages, nature of the accompaniment, etc.

Encourage learners to improvise in various styles. This could include making up a short cadenza or adding ornamentation.

P5 - A5

Hear a wider range of music internally when using notation/symbols, anticipating the sound in their heads

Using notation, ask learners to work out in their heads the sound of:

- phrases/pieces
- simple chords

then compare these with the actual sound when played.

Using notation, ask learners to describe the overall character of pieces, referring to style, structure, harmonic language, dynamic range, texture, etc. Suggest how they affect the mood of the music.

Ask learners to clap/hum/sing/say at sight appropriate phrases from pieces to be learnt.

Play extracts with subtle deviations from the text in terms of pitch, rhythm, articulation, phrasing, harmonies, dynamics, etc. Ask learners to point out the differences.



Music from all parts of the world is appropriate for these activities.

Programme of Study 5

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P5 - B1

Posture and freedom of movement

- Maintain physical freedom and ease, without unnecessary tension:
 - across the full range of the instrument, indicating awareness and understanding of the whole body as a balanced playing mechanism
 - playing with a comfortable and balanced position which ensures flexibility when playing hands separately and together
 - playing with free and confident movement
 - playing with economy of movement when tackling challenging and demanding passages

Discuss what effect using two or more keyboards together has on posture and freedom of movement. Help learners to formulate a detailed set-up plan with clear procedures, taking particular care over the heights of instruments and safeguarding good posture and forearm, wrist and hand positions.



Where learners are linking together two or more keyboards, computer equipment, sound modules, etc., it is vital that they understand and adhere to electrical health and safety procedures.

Ask learners to devise their own checklist of the main sources of tension. Discuss how tension can be alleviated.



Some learners with poor posture and/or tension problems find relaxation methods useful, e.g. yoga, Alexander Technique.

Continue to encourage positive body language when performing.



Encourage learners to attend a wide range of live performances where possible, and/or watch live performances online.

Encourage learners to use imagery in order to convey the character and mood of the music. Discuss how posture may contribute towards communication.

Provide opportunities for learners to observe how others communicate in performance, e.g. masterclasses, concerts.

Help learners to use their posture to communicate musical intention, e.g. beginning and/or changing tempo in an ensemble.

Discuss ways in which learners can develop the physical and mental stamina required to play longer, more demanding pieces.

P5 - B2

Registration

- Make creative and musically expressive choices by:
 - choosing and adapting registration with stylistic awareness and imagination, making full use of the instrument's features and settings
 - understanding how the keyboard can be used as a controller when using computer programs to create music
 - exploring the potential of computers to enhance musical possibilities, such as controlling the sound of the keyboard through a computer
 - using the pedal effectively, both as a sustaining mechanism and as a means of controlling registration in other programmable ways

Ask learners to choose suitable registration, listening to recordings where appropriate. Encourage them to explore alternatives, e.g. matching rhythms, voices and a full range of effects, showing sensitivity to the character of the piece, and to stylistic and cultural conventions.



Recordings could be of electronic keyboard players, or original versions of pieces/songs.

Show learners how to programme registration memories for an increasing range of own choices, e.g. auto-accompaniment, voice. Encourage them to remix and alter the orchestration of the auto-accompaniment, reprogramming voice effects as appropriate.

Introduce the principles of step then real-time sequencing, giving learners the opportunity to explore the techniques and equipment involved. Ask them to develop sequenced material for inclusion in a live musical performance.



Sequenced material, prepared in advance by the performer and delivered from a laptop computer via a MIDI connection, can make a powerful contribution to a live musical performance.

Show learners how to use the on-board song recording facility and off-board computer programs.

Ask learners to programme their own custom styles for use in the repertoire being learnt, referring to the keyboard's operating manual. This should include sequencing, quantising and mixing parts, adding intros, endings, accompaniment variations and fills to link sections.

Show learners how to record/store short musical phrases, using multi-pads and similar devices where available. Ask them to use these sequenced patterns in their pieces.

Demonstrate the effectiveness of using the pedal as a switch for changing registrations. Ask learners to explore this technique and refer them to the keyboard's operating manual for technical assistance.



This involves reprogramming the pedal set-up. There are normally instructions in the keyboard's operating manual.

Show learners how to use the pedal as a sustaining mechanism and also teach them legato pedalling. Where possible, arrange for learners to play their pieces on an acoustic piano, comparing and contrasting the pedalling strategies appropriate to each instrument.

P5 - B3


Fingering and articulation

- Observe and adhere to chosen fingering, suggesting fingering for passages
- Use standard and alternative fingering in a wide range of scales and arpeggios, including scales in thirds and sixths
- Connect hand positions with fluency and confidence at a variety of tempi
- Use finger substitution with ease
- Play a comprehensive range of chords including diminished, augmented, suspension and all standard chord extensions
- Use a range of appropriate fingerings for left-hand full-fingered chords
- Play with more variety of legato and non-legato articulation at a variety of tempi
- Shape and define phrases with autonomy, including dynamic control and rhythmic flexibility


Ask learners to play pieces without written fingering but to continue using consistent finger patterns.




Encourage learners to work out fingering for more difficult passages. Ask them to explain and discuss the relative merits of various alternatives.



Using a pattern of rapidly repeated, single notes, demonstrate the use of alternating fingers. Discuss the increased control that results, and provide opportunities for learners to develop confidence with this technique.




Ask learners to play a wide range of major, minor, chromatic, modal and blues scales, ensuring they use appropriate fingerings and a range of articulations and dynamics. Where possible, choose repertoire that uses the scales learnt.



Introduce scales with thirds and sixths in one hand.




Extend learners' range of arpeggios, including added sixths and all sevenths. Make links between the fingering of these and left-hand chords.




Ask learners to play exercises and pieces with a wide range of hand-position changes, jumps and octave stretches.




Learners with a sufficient hand span should learn to play octaves legato, alternating the fourth and fifth fingers.




Invite learners to suggest where finger substitutions will improve legato phrasing.



Help learners to work out chords on the basis of scales, arpeggios, intervals, etc., consulting chord charts as necessary. Explain the theory behind more unusual chords, e.g. diminished, augmented, suspensions. Encourage learners to work out new chords for themselves, e.g. added sixth.



Play a short chord progression which learners then attempt to copy by ear and/or write down. Play a wide variety of chord types, asking learners to identify them aurally.



Provide chord exercises using full-fingered chords in a variety of keys/modes. Ask learners to play these at a regular pulse, using the auto-accompaniment. Include inversions for their musical effect, having explained that, set correctly, the auto-accompaniments of more advanced keyboards reproduce the inversion played, rather than changing all chords to their root position.

Using a familiar piece, demonstrate the value of using alternative chords, e.g. during a repeated section, for variety and to highlight structural development. Ask learners to experiment with alternative chord progressions within a piece.

Introduce suitable pieces with an independent left-hand part. This could include hand-position changes, jumps and octave stretches (including playing legato in octaves).

Encourage learners to experiment with a variety of articulations within pieces. Ask them to give reasons for their choices in relation to the written music, the character of the piece, tempo, choice of registration, acoustics, etc.

Ask learners to work out phrasing throughout pieces. Ensure that sufficient attention is paid to articulation and dynamic contrasts in their aim to define phrasing and structure. Encourage them to explore alternatives.

Using touch response, help learners to explore the use of rubato and dynamics within a phrase.

P5 - B4

Coordination and rhythmic awareness

- Play with rhythmic control and security:
 - coordinating and integrating a complex right-hand melody and a full range of frequently changing left-hand full-fingered chords
 - keeping time with an auto-accompaniment and demonstrating a full command of registration
 - listening to and controlling the balance between melody, accompaniment, parts and voicings
 - incorporating additional sequenced material

Ensure that learners understand the skills involved in learning and practising pieces in coherent steps, including the preparation of custom styles and sequenced material as appropriate.

Ask learners to evaluate the balance between voicings when they play an independent left-hand part. Introduce suitable exercises to improve tonal control as necessary.



Pieces written for piano may need some adaptation, e.g. transposing the pitch by an octave in order to access the range of written notes. Learners often benefit from playing appropriate pieces on an acoustic piano. It enables them not only to compare the musical effect and technical approach needed, but also gives them greater breadth of experience.

Teach learners to play more complex vamps, e.g. stride, Latin. Help them to maintain the rhythmic momentum against varied right-hand note values, including threes against twos and eventually threes against fours.

Encourage learners to make extended arrangements of pieces, with or without auto-accompaniment. These could include improvisations, right-hand harmony notes, independent left-hand parts, and original composed and/or sequenced material of their own.

Help learners to include changes of registration spontaneously, using their own pre-set registration memories and a pedal as a switch or as a sustaining mechanism.

After listening together to suitable examples, ask learners to consider how articulation and legato phrasing are approached on different instruments, and what these consciously applied expressive qualities contribute to the overall effect of the music, e.g. making a dance movement seem more animated or a melodic piece more song-like. Explore ways for learners to recreate what they have heard in these examples in their own playing.



Listening to other instruments' means of expression can broaden learners' musical awareness. Some instruments have a more natural capacity for legato, i.e. through playing several notes in one bow or breath, and non-legato, i.e. through changing bow or tonguing between notes. Internalising different phrasing characteristics through vocal imitation is a good place to start, followed by playing short passages by ear.

With learners, choose an item of repertoire in which articulations, slurs and phrase marks are specified in the text, e.g. a 20th- or 21st-century piece. Ask them to internalise and apply these expressive qualities from the start of the learning process, using the appropriate techniques.

Next, select together an item of repertoire in which articulations, slurs and phrase marks are not specified, e.g. a baroque dance. From the start of the learning process, ask learners to incorporate these expressive

qualities, using their knowledge and understanding of musical style, etc., and combining the appropriate techniques with an awareness of phrasing and structure.

Programme of Study 5

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P5 - C1

Improvise extended musical ideas with a sense of direction and shape as they develop their own personal style

Ask learners to improvise a piece involving a simple modulation, possibly within a given structure, e.g. A (tonic) B (dominant) A (tonic). Explore techniques involved in modulating and apply them in other improvisations.



Ensure that technical points are fully understood and absorbed, e.g. modulations to relative keys.

Continue to link improvisations to repertoire being studied, e.g. learners improvise a short piece in the style of a well-known composer.

Ask learners, or possibly teacher and learner, to extend a melody by improvising in turn, each player basing the improvisation on the previous section. Aim for coherence and expression within an agreed style.

Encourage learners to make more elaborate improvisations within pieces using a range of scales, including blues and modal.

Demonstrate the effectiveness of making spontaneous changes to underlying chord progressions where appropriate, e.g. adding sevenths and other extensions. Encourage learners to experiment similarly as they play pieces and improvise solos.



Improvisation provides an obvious and enjoyable way of exploring musical devices and conventions. It often provides the groundwork for more extended compositions. These advanced improvisations can be as challenging for the teacher as the learner!

Teach a well-known jazz standard, e.g. 'I Got Rhythm':

- play learners a recording of the piece
- familiarise them with the 32-bar A A B A form and teach them the chords and melody. Play it with them as a learner/teacher duo, swapping roles

- demonstrate how to embellish the melody freely and encourage learners to do the same when their turn comes
- finally, ask them to improvise over the chords, making fewer references to the original melody



Latin-American jazz styles also provide an accessible way into jazz improvisation. The samba employs 'straight' as opposed to 'swung' quaver rhythms, while the use of 'chord tones' as a stock improvisational device, i.e. playing the notes of the chords rather than scales, limits the number of notes learners need to hear and use at any given point.

Ask learners to devise/use a graphic score as the basis for a free improvisation in a contemporary style.

P5 - C2

Compose with consistency of style, coherence of musical ideas and a degree of individuality, and by making the most of the instrumental resources

Ask learners to compose pieces for more than one instrument, e.g. keyboard duet or keyboard with other instruments.



Compositions for more than one instrument provide opportunities for learners to explore different textures. Learners can use techniques associated with pieces being learnt. These may include contrapuntal textures and more complex structures, and can involve a higher level of technical difficulty for the performer. Alternatively, limitations may be imposed, e.g. thematic, structural, technical. Encourage learners to exploit the idiomatic potential of instruments.

Suggest that learners compose using the auto-accompaniment and independent left-hand playing techniques.

Support learners in refining, notating and evaluating their ideas.

Provide guidance on writing for other instruments/voices.

Provide opportunities for learners' compositions to be performed, if possible in public, and make recordings to help evaluation.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Ask learners to write programme notes for their pieces, including details of background, style, intention and outcomes.

Programme of Study 5

D Playing music

P5 - D1

Work out by ear how to play pieces of increasing complexity

Demonstrate how to play melodies by ear in different keys. Initially, let learners take the most natural key and then transpose to another.

As an extension activity, encourage learners to play a well-known tune in a 'difficult' key and note the problems that need solving.

Ask learners to practise playing a familiar piece, e.g. 'Happy Birthday', in a variety of keys.



Transposing by ear is an important tool for the advanced musician. Don't just rely on the transposing button!

Ask learners to make up some variations on well-known tunes by ear, using a range of melodic and/or rhythmic patterns.

Help learners to internalise both melodic and harmonic elements by ear.

P5 - D2

Repeat longer and more complex phrases, involving different tempi, keys, tonality, and transpositions where appropriate

Encourage learners to play back longer and more complex musical extracts from memory, using a wide range of styles, e.g. ritornello, raga, hooks and riffs.

Ask learners to practise repeating patterns that may include augmented and diminished intervals, asymmetrical phrases and irregular rhythms.

Play a three- or four-part chord or simple chord progression and ask learners to play the upper, inner and lower parts in turn; alternatively, allocate a part to each learner and ask for each chord to be played separately, then as a progression.

As an extension activity, discuss whether the chords are major, minor, diminished, etc. and which position/inversion they are in.

P5 - D3

Play a range of pieces from different styles and periods that are technically and musically advanced



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Continue the holistic approach to learning new pieces by:

- enabling learners to research background knowledge of style, period, etc.
- discussing the structure, harmonic language, etc.
- ensuring that technical skills are applied to the musical context
- devising related listening exercises that support the learning and memorisation of key features of the music
- enriching learners' understanding by structuring improvisations based on ideas from the pieces being learnt
- providing opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation, using criteria that have been devised by learners themselves

Continue to encourage learners to learn pieces away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.

Continue to suggest appropriate practising strategies.

P5 - D4

Memorise systematically and independently pieces from their repertoire with refinement and expressive subtlety, demonstrating a personal response to the music

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from the repertoire being learnt. Offer particular strategies for dealing with longer and more complex pieces, so that learners remember music in different ways. These could include:

- devising ways of visualising the music, ranging from imagining a simple picture outline to a more photographic image
- relating memory to touch and movement, e.g. finger movement, hand position and patterns of notes
- supporting learners in knowing the sound in their heads
- analysing the structure of the music, e.g. counting the number of times a phrase occurs, noting key changes and sequences, consciously remembering deviations and exit points



The aim should be for the eyes, ears and hands to work together as an integral unit.

Provide opportunities for repeated playing and testing in order for learners to develop complete security.



By memorising the music, many performers are able to:

- focus more intimately on the music
- have greater freedom in their playing
- communicate more directly

However, if a musician is not comfortable performing in public without notation then this is by no means essential.

P5 - D5

Read and play at sight a range of pieces in a variety of styles containing elements of surprise and deviation: internalise and incorporate a wide range of time signatures and tempi, rhythmic patterns, melodic range, intervals, tonality and expression



Many genres of music are traditionally learnt exclusively by ear. Where it would support learning, you may wish to create notation systems that are appropriate to your teaching context, e.g. word rhythms, symbols, numbers, or vocal sounds. However, this may not be necessary or desirable for all musics. Music passed on orally/aurally naturally evolves as it spreads and being fixed in notation can hinder this.

Provide sight-reading practice in music that features a wide range of rhythmic and melodic devices, e.g. syncopated jazz rhythms and a variety of subdivisions where the rhythms are 'straight'. Include pieces that

contain elements of surprise and, with learners, formulate strategies for dealing with them.



Pieces can either include the auto-accompaniment or independent left-hand parts using bass-clef notation and irregular time signatures. Include instructions for changes of registration, dynamics effected with the volume control, etc.



Ensure learners look through the music first, adopting the structured approach described in earlier programmes, in order to internalise the overall sound and character, and spot potential problems.

Discuss the overall character and style of sight-reading pieces with learners, emphasising the importance of communicating this to others.

Encourage learners to sight-read straightforward, standard repertoire rather than sight-reading exercises.



It is often useful to return to simple music to develop sight-reading skills and, in particular, the ability to read at sight quickly and fluently. This also helps to build up confidence.



Promote the value of sight-reading as a way of accessing and gaining greater familiarity with a wide range of music.

P5 - D6

Interpret music personally with consistency of style, and an understanding of idiomatic performing conventions; make independent, critical judgements about their interpretation

Ask learners to evaluate their approach to the interpretation of pieces being studied, justifying musical decisions by referring to musical styles, conventions and personal feelings.

Explore alternative ways of interpreting the directions of the composer.

With learners, discuss the interpretations of others, possibly including professional performances and those of their peers, and compare them with their own.

Encourage learners to respond imaginatively to their own playing, and that of others, as performances

unfold.

Encourage learners to explore alternative ways of interpreting pieces, taking into account their knowledge of genre and period, e.g. approaches to ornaments, cadences, phrasing and articulation, tone quality, etc.

Encourage learners to communicate their feelings, within their knowledge and understanding of the style, with more freedom, conviction and independence.

Programme of Study 5

E Playing music with others

P5 - E1

Play with others with assurance and sensitivity, demonstrating an empathy with other performers and musical leadership

Provide ensemble opportunities that make increasing musical and technical demands on learners.

Help learners to develop more sensitivity and subtlety in their playing, e.g. shaping of phrases, variety of articulation, rhythmic flexibility, through increasing musical awareness and communication within the group.

Invite individual learners to take the lead and direct others.

Acknowledge unexpected musical outcomes.

Provide a variety of performing opportunities.



Bear in mind that it can take considerable time and effort to organise ensemble opportunities. It is helpful, therefore, to work in close collaboration with school music departments, Music Services/Hubs, local performing groups and/or other appropriate organisations.

P5 - E2

Contribute their own interpretative ideas and respond to those of others, conveying the character and style of the music

Encourage learners to use their knowledge, understanding and relevant musical experience to inform their discussions as they seek to develop a shared interpretation.

Encourage all learners to contribute to a shared interpretation that is developed and refined as the piece is practised and performed.

Programme of Study 5

F Performing and communicating

P5 - F1

Perform music to others with confidence and conviction, communicating the character and style of the music; demonstrate empathy with other performers and with the audience

Organise performing opportunities at a variety of occasions and venues, e.g. school events, concerts in the wider community.



It should be remembered that people respond differently to the idea of performing. For some it will be rewarding and motivating, but for others it can be stressful to the extent that they may be ill or wish to give up playing. In preparing for a performance, the following should be taken into account:

- the physical and psychological well-being of the learner
- the learner's motivation
- the perceived importance of the performance
- social relationships with other members of the group

Bear in mind that some learners may not wish to perform in public.

Where appropriate, ask learners to research information on each piece, e.g. details on the style of music, the composer's life, the historical/social context, and prepare a short talk/introduction to each piece.

Give learners opportunities to practise their presentational skills.



In addition to other skills of presentation already acquired, learners should practise projecting their voices and slowing down delivery when talking to an audience.

During lessons, encourage learners to develop their own personal interpretations through discussion and debate. Ask them to justify their decisions using appropriate musical vocabulary.

Encourage learners to perform some or all of their pieces from memory where this will enhance confidence,

musical awareness and communication.

Refine pieces through simulated performances in lessons and by performances to others in preparation for concerts within the wider community.

Continue to encourage learners to make music and perform with others, both in directed and non-directed groups.

P5 - F2

Make informed evaluations about their performance in the light of their knowledge about the music and the interpretations of distinguished musicians

Ask learners to evaluate their performances critically, identifying strengths and areas for development.

Continue to use technology where appropriate to make audio or video recordings so that learners can listen/watch back and evaluate their performance.



It is vital to check the policy of the school or other organisation you are working in with regards to any form of recording. Children must never be videoed without parental consent and all policies regarding use and storage of recordings must be adhered to.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform to distinguished musicians/teachers in a masterclass situation.



It can be valuable for learners to hear positive, constructive guidance from someone other than their own teacher.



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