



The voice curriculum provides a basis for developing the singing voice through a range of techniques, strategies and activities whilst accommodating a broad range of genres and voice types.

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** Singing music
- E** Singing 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 sung

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 sung or 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 sung or played, i.e. moving in time or beating time to music with a regular pulse. Repeat at different tempi.



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).

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

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

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

Sing 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 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

- Stand well, with an awareness of a relaxed and balanced posture

Discuss aspects of good posture with learners. Explore ways of stretching and relaxing to establish physical freedom.



Encourage learners to be aware of their posture when practising at home. It is important to focus on releasing tension, making sure that the head, neck and shoulders move freely.

Show learners how to stand when singing, with the feet slightly apart, giving a central balance, hands and arms relaxed by the side, and the head level. Ask learners to aim for consistency.



Reinforce the importance of always taking a moment to ensure that posture is correct before starting to sing, whether in the lesson or in individual practice. Be aware of learners' individual physical characteristics and make adaptations as appropriate.



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.



Recommend that learners use a mirror to check their posture. 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.

P1 - B2

Breathing

- Breathe freely, developing an awareness of how the breathing mechanism works whilst maintaining a relaxed and balanced posture

Help learners to establish good breathing habits by ensuring that their ribcages expand so that the lungs are filled with air.



Learners should stand whenever they sing.

Ask learners to experiment with breathing slowly through the nose or the mouth, making sure that the shoulders do not rise.



Learners are often more aware of the sensation of breathing when they breathe out first.

Explore different ways of breathing out, e.g. breathing out on an unvoiced sigh, or gently blowing an imaginary candle so that it flickers but does not go out, or hissing like a snake with a constant stream of air. Ensure learners maintain good posture.



When singing, singers normally breathe through the mouth. Discourage learners from collapsing inwards physically as the breath runs out.

P1 - B3

Vocal quality

- Sing with a clear tone within a comfortable range

Show learners how to sing freely within a comfortable range. Encourage them to explore their vocal range by using humming and sliding exercises.



Each voice is unique, so care needs to be taken to choose exercises and songs that lie comfortably within each learner's range, working from high to low.

Help learners to open the back of the throat, e.g. by vocalising on a sighed 'aah' sound.

P1 - B4

Intonation

- Sing with reasonably secure intonation

Draw attention to the importance of pitching accurately. Perform a song and ask learners to indicate changes of pitch through gesture, e.g. showing when the pitch changes by moving their hands (sol-fa hand-signs can be used).

Ask learners to sing the notes of a triad in root position, gradually varying the order of the notes.



'Voice to voice' usually encourages better intonation than using a piano/keyboard.

Ask learners to sing up and down the first five notes of the major scale unaccompanied, at a suitable pitch, either using sol-fa, numbers or note names.



Learners should be encouraged to hear each sound internally before they sing it. Sol-fa is a great help.

When the above exercise is secure, extend to singing intervals to numbers, e.g. 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5.



This activity also helps to develop the aural recognition of intervals.

P1 - B5

Articulation and diction

- Sing with clear diction, focusing on crisp consonants and clear, open vowel sounds

Demonstrate to learners how to sing with clear diction, with precise beginnings and endings of words and

open vowels.

Introduce some tongue-twisters. Learners first say them, and then sing them clearly on a monotone or to a simple melodic pattern.



Tongue-twisters can be used in all the Programmes of Study.

Encourage learners to make up their own tongue-twisters and add their own simple tunes, using the first five notes of the major scale.

Ensure that learners recite clearly the words of each song with understanding and expression.



As learners become aware of the meaning of words, they should be able to focus on how this will influence where they breathe.

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 vocal sounds in response to a text or a picture.



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. call and response, using simple rhythms then simple tunes. Abstract or pictorial ideas could also be used.

Play 'Follow my Leader': one singer sings a short phrase, then the next singer sings another phrase, starting on the last note of the first singer, and so on. Aim for musical coherence.

P1 - C2

Make use of vocal skills when beginning to compose

Ask learners to make up simple tunes to appropriate words. Help them to refine their songs and discuss the outcomes with them.



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.

Ask learners to write down their improvisations as an aid to memory, perhaps using their own forms of

shorthand as a precursor to staff notation.



It may be necessary to score learners' 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.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their songs to others.

Encourage learners to use their voices in creative activities in the classroom.



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

Programme of Study 1

D Singing music

P1 - D1

Understand the meaning of the text of simple songs

Ask learners to explain the meaning of each song they are learning.



Understanding the text will always inform learners' phrasing and breathing.

P1 - D2

Repeat short, easy rhythmic and melodic patterns by singing 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 an instrument where appropriate.



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

Sing short, easy songs 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 songs 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

Show learners how to practise their songs and make improvements.



Adopt the holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Memorise with accuracy selected short, simple songs from their repertoire

Help learners to memorise selected songs 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 song away from the music, only referring to the notation once it is learnt.

Encourage learners to sing 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 sing 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.

Ask learners to copy short, simple rhythm patterns. Then show them how to read rhythm patterns, using flash cards for clapping, whilst maintaining a steady pulse. Progress to singing short, simple melodic phrases, using flash cards.



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.



The overall aim is to help learners to develop instant recall of notes and rhythms, thus heightening musical memory. Help learners to gain enthusiasm for learning songs, using notation when appropriate. Ensure that its use is encouraging rather than discouraging.

When beginning to sight-sing, sing simple melodies moving by step, without words.

Progress to melodies that incorporate simple intervals, e.g. minor third, gradually introducing words.

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 and suggest improvements to convey the character of the music

Ask learners to explain the meaning of each song they are learning.



Understanding the text will always inform learners' phrasing and breathing.

Involving all learners in the group, discuss ways of improving the interpretation, particularly in songs 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 Singing with others

P1 - E1

Sing 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:

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



In addition to their lessons, all learners should be provided with opportunities for participation in ensembles. By singing 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 singing 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 singing, 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 vocal 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 singing 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 sung, 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.



Singing to learners provides an immediate way of modelling, i.e. demonstrating musical ideas and techniques, as well as developing aural skills.

P2 - A3

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

Sing or 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.

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 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 singing, 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 sung.

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

- Stand well, with awareness of a relaxed and balanced posture

Ensure that learners adopt a relaxed posture, encouraging them to check it throughout the lesson, using a mirror if possible.



It is best to start each lesson focusing on posture.

Discuss the effect of poor posture on musical outcomes.

In group lessons, encourage learners to check each other's posture, so that they can become familiar with what to look for and can link this to their individual practice.



When using notation, the music should be at a height that allows learners to project their voices and maintain a good standing posture.

P2 - B2

Breathing

- Breathe freely with control over longer phrases, developing an awareness of how the breathing mechanism works whilst maintaining a relaxed and balanced posture

Using vowel sounds, encourage learners to sing long notes whilst maintaining a full tone. This should help them to breathe freely, with control over longer phrases.



Care should be taken not to conserve the breath at the expense of tone.

Ask learners to practise ‘voicing’ exercises, gradually extending the length, e.g. using humming, or a continuous ‘sss’ sound.

P2 - B3

Vocal quality

- Sing confidently with a clear tone within a comfortable range

Discuss with learners how to sing freely within a comfortable range, developing a free vocal tone.



Some learners are reluctant to experiment with higher notes and may need lots of encouragement.

Ask learners to sing scales, initially descending, starting on C above middle C, then D, etc.

Teach learners to sing step-wise exercises up and down a fifth, slowly at first, then gradually increasing speed to improve flexibility.

Ask learners to sing a ‘coo’ sound, on C or D above middle C, on a long sustained note. This should help them begin to develop the upper register.

Help learners to make audio recordings of their singing as a tool for evaluating their tone, using an audio recording app.

P2 - B4

Intonation

- Sing with more secure intonation

Using vowel sounds, ask learners to practise singing short melodies (incorporating larger intervals) slowly, focusing on accurate pitching.

Encourage learners to listen to and assess their own intonation (in accompanied and unaccompanied

singing) in order to help them recognise when they are singing out of tune.

In group lessons, ask learners to listen to each other and assess each other's intonation.

Make recordings of learners singing. Ask them to listen carefully and comment on the intonation.



Video-recording could be used, 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.

P2 - B5

Articulation and diction

- Focus on clear beginnings and endings of words in a relaxed manner

Demonstrate how to sing crisp consonants in an open and relaxed manner.

Ask learners to sing the melody of a song to vowel sounds rather than words.



Learners may need to be encouraged to drop the jaw when singing vowel sounds

Ask learners to sing one vowel sound to a descending scale, maintaining a relaxed, round mouth shape.

Merge vowel sounds, perhaps linking them to step-wise melodic exercises, e.g. 'ee-ai-ah' or 'oo-aw-ah', sung on consecutive notes.

Use repeated consonants, spoken then sung, e.g. 'bbbb', 'pppp', etc.

Encourage learners to make up their own consonant and vowel patterns for others in their group to copy.

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 vocal sounds and phrases freely in response to a picture or story.

Ask learners to sing short question-and-answer phrases with each other and/or with the teacher in a variety of styles:

- helping them to experiment with patterns and discuss the musical effects
- encouraging them to shape the improvisation within a simple structure
- aiming to generate a particular mood or atmosphere
- providing opportunities for them to perform to each other



Learners should try to make question-and-answer phrases sound as if they are part of the same 'conversation'.

Ask learners to improvise simple melodies using call and response, with increasing expectation of accuracy in terms of rhythm, dynamics and intonation. Develop the activity in the same way as the one above.



It is often helpful if learners aim to create a particular mood or atmosphere in their improvisations.

P2 - C2

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

Provide opportunities for learners to compose their own songs, building on ideas from pieces that they are learning. Starting points can be words or a simple musical phrase.

Ask learners to explore musical ideas using their voices, and possibly a musical instrument, jotting down the main points.



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

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 and reviewed in each lesson.

Programme of Study 2

D Singing music

P2 - D1

Understand the meaning of the text of songs

To reinforce the meaning of the text, continue to encourage learners to explain the texts of the songs they are learning.

P2 - D2

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

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.



Use the holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Demonstrate different ways of interpreting the music and encourage learners to apply their own creative ideas, e.g. using ideas in the song to generate their own compositions.



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

Ask learners to sing songs that have simple independent accompaniments, e.g. folk-songs.



Sections of any song where the accompaniment is independent of the melody may need more practice.

Show learners how to practise their songs and make improvements.

P2 - D3

Sing a variety of short, easy songs or 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 songs 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 song to generate their own improvisations or compositions.

Show learners how to practise their songs and make improvements.



Use the holistic approach. 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

Sing from memory, and to others, selected contrasting songs from their repertoire

Help learners to learn selected songs 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 sing at sight short, easy songs 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 sing short, simple passages/songs at sight, making sure that they are well within their technical range.

Before singing through passages/songs 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
- note the phrasing



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.

Encourage learners to incorporate phrasing and expression as essential aspects of the music



Point out to learners that when first singing a song 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.

P2 - D6

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 songs, encourage learners to make independent decisions about expressive features, such as dynamics, tempi, phrasing, articulation, and tone quality.

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 Singing with others

P2 - E1

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

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

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

Ask learners to sing 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, singing 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 singing.

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 singing 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 vocal 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 singing

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 sung, 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

Sing or 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 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.

Sing or 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 singing, 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.

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. sing in their heads simple phrases and then compare with the actual sound when sung aloud.

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 a relaxed and balanced posture whilst using simple gesture where appropriate

Draw learners' attention to the need to ensure that all gesture should be appropriate to the style of the song, and in the context of the words, e.g. an African song might have movement and gesture on the beat.

Introduce a gospel song and show learners how to practise moving their feet to feel the pulse.



Ensure that the quality of the singing does not deteriorate when gesture/movement is added.

P3 - B2

Breathing

- Breathe freely, developing an awareness of breath control over increasingly longer phrases
- Control their breathing to enable them to sing with more expressive variation

Ask learners to sing on one note within the centre of their vocal range, counting on the pulse and gradually extending the length of the note whenever this activity is repeated.

Increasingly extend the number of repetitions of short exercises sung on one breath.

Gradually crescendo on a long, sustained note, choosing a comfortable pitch in the middle of the vocal range.



Remember to ensure that the chest does not collapse and that the ribcage stays controlled. Learners should be aware that, when breathing in, the diaphragm descends with an expansion of the muscles in the midriff and the back. The controlled return of the diaphragm to its original position is essential for good quality tone production and intonation.

P3 - B3

Vocal quality

- Sing with a clear tone, gradually extending the vocal range

Explain how to create extra space for resonance. Compare opening the throat and raising the soft palate to downing a pint or a glass of lemonade in one gulp.



Always try to work from the top to the bottom of the voice to avoid the lower chest resonance being used at too high a pitch.

To brighten the tone, ask learners to sing a sincere American 'Hi!', with raised cheek muscles and eyebrows to encourage a more forward sound.

P3 - B4

Intonation

- Sing with secure intonation with a growing awareness of its importance

Take phrases containing 'difficult' intervals out of known songs and help learners to practise pitching accurately. Humming may help.



Unaccompanied singing is excellent for improving intonation.

Encourage learners to think about and internalise the opening notes of a song before singing them.



The use of sol-fa hand-signs provides an excellent aid to developing the 'inner ear'.

Articulation and diction

- Develop an awareness of how to use the tongue, teeth, lips and palate in the clear articulation of words, including those with diphthongs

Ask learners to sing scales to words like 'pepperoni', 'margarita' and 'chocolate'.

To develop legato singing, ask learners to sing phrases from songs, taking out the consonants, i.e. only singing the vowel sounds.

For staccato singing, show learners how to practise short 'bursts of steam' with an 's' sound. Then ask them to sing the same length of notes on open-vowel sounds and finally on voiced consonants, e.g. j (pronounced 'jhe').



Remember that when singing English in a classical style most of the emphasis and length in diphthongs are on the first vowel, with some notable exceptions, e.g. 'music'.



Ensure good legato singing before introducing staccato. This aspect of singing also links closely to breathing and the development of control of the diaphragm.

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 voice

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles, e.g. gospel, folk-songs; draw on relevant musical devices from songs being learnt where appropriate
- by varying a theme, exploring contrasts of musical elements, e.g. pitch, rhythm, tonality, dynamics
- using a free theme based on the words of a poem



Improvisation provides opportunities for learners to extend their own musical ideas within the context of what they have learned. As vocal 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.

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.

P3 - C2

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

Ask learners to compose short pieces of music for voices (and possibly 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 vocal 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 a vocal part over the top.



Song Maker on Chrome Music Lab would work well for this.

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

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

Programme of Study 3

D Singing music

P3 - D1

Understand and begin to interpret the meaning of the text of the songs being studied

Encourage learners to explore the text of songs they are learning for devices such as alliteration, and observe how this affects the music, and ultimately their own performance.

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, and tunes with a wider range.

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

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

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

P3 - D3

Sing a variety of moderately easy songs 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 songs 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
- includes music with more complex independent accompaniments
- includes songs from other cultures, particularly those from an aural/oral tradition

P3 - D4

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

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

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

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

Provide opportunities for learners to sing 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 songs become more familiar.

P3 - D5

Read and sing at sight a variety of short, straightforward songs 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 sing at sight music that is well within their technical range and in simple keys or modes, starting on the tonic.

Extend the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 2. Thus, before singing through songs 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, e.g. fourth, fifth, octave, semitone



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

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.



Sight-reading can always be connected to learning repertoire because the skills are applied when reading songs 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.

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 songs 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 singing, even when learning the notes. Considerations of interpretation often inform the way passages are learnt, e.g. in relation to phrasing, articulation, tempo.

Programme of Study 3

E Singing with others

P3 - E1

Sing 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 singing with others.



Aim to extend and develop the necessary listening skills for singing 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 singing 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 choirs, 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 sung, 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 singing, e.g. tempo, articulation, phrasing

Help learners to sing 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 sing.

When singing 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 sung.

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 a relaxed posture whilst projecting a positive performance image, including gesture where appropriate

Remind learners of the importance of maintaining a relaxed posture whilst projecting a positive performing image. Ask learners to add simple appropriate characterisation to a song through stance and gesture, e.g. 'Consider Yourself' from Oliver.

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

Encourage learners to observe themselves and others performing, noting the effects of posture on communication.



Encourage learners to check posture/gesture/characterisation in a mirror, to make sure they are all appropriate to the song. 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.



The teacher/other learners can act as audience.



An occasional lesson in a large space can help to encourage projection.



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

P4 - B2

Breathing

- Understand how the breathing mechanism works
- Understand how breathing affects all aspects of singing

Discuss how the breathing mechanism works. Encourage learners to explore their own breathing mechanism, e.g. when breathing in, they can imagine they are inflating a rubber ring around their middle. When exhaling, they can produce a 'ssss' sound, as though the ring has sprung a leak.



This activity may be used as homework, which learners practise to achieve greater control.

As an extension activity, ask learners to stop and start the 'ssss' sound, all in one breath, to develop control of the diaphragm.



As a follow up, some learners may wish to be given a more detailed explanation about breath control.

Demonstrate how to support the voice and emphasise how good support affects all aspects of singing. Ask learners to sing a slow crescendo and diminuendo on one note, at a comfortable pitch. Apply the technique to appropriate phrases in songs and discuss the expressive effect.



Ensure that learners maintain a constant pitch when using a slow crescendo and/or diminuendo.

P4 - B3

Vocal quality

- Sing with a clear tone throughout their range, developing an even tone across different registers
- Develop vocal qualities and awareness of their effect on tone

Show learners how to sing with a free vocal tone throughout their range. As a vocal experiment, ask them, regardless of voice type, to explore high and low pitch, e.g. through experimenting with portamenti.



If learners sing in choirs, ensure that those who have good aural and music-reading skills are not pigeonholed into singing lower parts when their natural voice is higher.



Changing voices need sensitive handling, particularly in the case of boys, who should be encouraged to continue singing, gradually moving down the vocal range.

In order to develop an awareness of vocal qualities and their effect on tone quality, experiment with varying moods or colours within a song or exercise. Discuss the changes in tone quality and ask learners to decide which would be most appropriate for the character of the music.



Group lessons can provide an opportunity for learners to listen to and comment on each other's tone quality.

P4 - B4

Intonation

- Begin to understand some possible causes of poor intonation and how to correct them

Discuss ways of singing in tune throughout the learners' range. Practise singing unaccompanied phrases from songs being studied, or which are well-known, ensuring that challenging intervals are accurate.



In order to make perceptive, helpful comments, it is important that teachers resist the temptation to sing with learners!

Discuss possible causes of poor intonation. Encourage learners to listen carefully and recognise when intonation difficulties arise. Ask them to analyse the possible causes, e.g. lack of support through faulty breathing techniques – particularly in descending phrases; the lack of preparation of the sound (internalisation); 'pushing' the voice from the throat; under-energising.



Record learners' performances, and encourage them to listen to each other in group lessons, focusing on a good quality of intonation. Video-recording could be used, 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.

Articulation and diction

- Build an awareness of how to use the tongue, teeth, lips and palate in the clear and correct articulation of words

Demonstrate how to use the tongue, teeth, lips and palate in order to ensure clear and correct articulation of words. Take difficult individual words from songs being studied and ask learners to practise, singing them in scales.



Remember to revisit songs already known.

To understand the difference between legato and staccato singing, encourage learners to experiment with the use of the diaphragm, e.g. voiced consonants on a sigh, panting, 'ape' noises.



Learners need to be made aware of the differences in articulation and diction in more popular styles and music theatre.

Encourage learners to listen to each other in group lessons, particularly noting aspects of articulation and diction. Ask them to suggest where and how improvements can be made.

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

Provide opportunities for learners to develop jazz improvisations. Demonstrate the appropriate techniques, using recordings, and encourage learners to develop their own personal style.



Singing is the most natural and spontaneous way of improvising. In order to improvise, learners need to have first an idea of the music in their heads. By developing their ideas in a relaxed manner, they can develop coherence and fluency, enjoying this creative aspect of singing.

Ask learners to improvise melodies above predetermined harmonic patterns, using conventions and techniques within the chosen style, e.g. melodies in an Aeolian mode.



A chord sequence of Am7/Dm7/Em7/Am7 provides a suitable accompaniment. The Aeolian mode would be A B C D E F G A.

Ask learners to improvise and embellish short melodies using a variety of scales, e.g. major, minor, pentatonic, blues, chromatic, modes.



Focus on developing an awareness of style by relating the particular scale or mode to repertoire being studied, e.g. folk-songs, spirituals, gospel songs, African rain-songs. Research less-familiar musics and make links with curriculum music where appropriate.

Help learners to develop confidence by improvising frequently and doing a little at a time.

Make recordings of improvisations and discuss the outcomes with learners.

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 for voice, with accompaniment if possible, aiming for consistency of style within each piece
- a short piece for an ensemble, e.g. a simple part-song, exploring aspects of textures, solos and accompaniments



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 Singing music

P4 - D1

Understand how to interpret the meaning of the text of songs

Encourage learners to investigate possible changes in the tone colour suggested by the text.

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.

Sing 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.

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

Sing simple songs in canon, with either the teacher or other members of the group leading. The second group repeats the part sung by the first group.

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

P4 - D3

Sing a variety of songs 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. phrasing, 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 songs independently of singing them. This will help them to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, word colouring, subtleties of tempo, etc.



As boys' voices change, remember that it may be necessary to help them to read from a different clef.



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.

Ask learners to listen carefully to accompaniments, particularly where they provide less support to the vocal line, i.e. have greater independence. Extra help with intonation may be necessary in these passages.



When selecting repertoire, include a variety of extended and more technically challenging songs from different styles and traditions that have:

- a variety of time signatures, including compound time and asymmetrical, e.g. 5/4
- more challenging subdivisions of the beat, including syncopated rhythms and triplets
- chromatic passages and modulations

P4 - D4

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

Encourage learners to read music without singing it, as another way to help with memorising songs.

Ask learners to memorise short songs or sections of music this way, then sing them without using the music, with or without an accompaniment.



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 singing the piece with their eyes closed, including all performance details.



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.

P4 - D5

Read and sing at sight moderately easy songs 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 sing appropriate music at sight, using the structured approach outlined in Programme of Study 3, i.e. before singing through songs for the first time, help learners to gain a clear internal picture of the overall shape and character of the music.

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 of Study, 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 songs 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 songs, e.g. musical forms, repetition, contrast, development techniques, and to communicate their feelings and understanding in their singing.



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

Programme of Study 4

E Singing with others

P4 - E1

Sing 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 singing in small ensembles.

Discuss ways of using rehearsal time effectively, e.g. marking scores and parts, 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 choirs 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 sung, 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 singing, interpreting music both personally and idiomatically

Help learners to sing 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 tempi, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, etc. in pieces from different styles and traditions. Encourage them to develop personal interpretations.

Discuss the musical effects of more advanced technical devices, e.g. portamenti, ornamentation, 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 sung.
-

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.

Sing 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 a relaxed posture whilst projecting a positive performance image, including when moving, e.g. music theatre

Remind learners how to maintain a relaxed posture whilst projecting a positive performing image.



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

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

Encourage learners to use imagery in order to convey the character and mood of the music. Discuss how posture may contribute towards communication, e.g. assuming a suitably relaxed posture in 'Song of the Night Club Proprietress' by Madeleine Dring, or 'Luck Be a Lady' from Guys and Dolls.

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 a piece, changing tempo in an ensemble performance.



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

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

P5 - B2

Breathing

- Understand the physiology of breathing
- Understand how breathing affects all aspects of singing, including the quality of performance

Help learners to understand the workings of the diaphragm, ribs, lungs and abdominal muscles and to apply this knowledge when singing.

Suggest to learners that they lie on the floor and observe the natural movement of the breathing mechanism.

As an extension activity, ask learners to sit or stand, leaning forward, feeling the movement of the back when breathing in.

Encourage learners to plan their breathing throughout each song, and to analyse the results when they perform.



Remember that learners may become dizzy if they have not developed sufficient stamina to cope with a succession of breathing exercises.

P5 - B3

Vocal quality

- Sing with a clear tone throughout their range, maintaining an even tone across different registers
- Use different vocal qualities over a wide range, using the appropriate quality for the genre or style of music

Ensure that learners sing freely throughout their range with an even tone.



If a learner has difficulty with 'gear changes', always work from the top of the voice downwards through the different vocal resonances.

Ask learners to sing scales and exercises over a wider range, trying to match up the different vocal registers, i.e. minimising any 'gear changes' between different parts of the voice.

Taking into account the mood and character of a song, ask learners to explore a variety of tone colours, e.g. by varying the vocal quality, 'word colouring'.



Always aim for the voice to move freely and evenly throughout the whole range without any weak areas.

P5 - B4

Intonation

- Understand the causes of insecure intonation and how to correct them

Ensure that learners sing in tune throughout their range, including awkward intervals and chromatic passages.



In popular styles, the judicious use of portamento, both upwards and downwards, can be used for expressive purposes.

Ask learners to practise singing down a chromatic scale, then back up to the correct start note (which has been internalised), using different vowel sounds.



When singing a chromatic scale, it helps to think of small intervals going down and large intervals going up.

Continue to encourage learners to analyse the possible causes of poor intonation.

Encourage learners to be aware of 'darker' vowels, e.g. 'o' as in 'for', which might cause flat singing, and 'brighter' vowels, e.g. 'ee', which might cause sharp singing.

Remind learners that voiced consonants, e.g. l, m, n, r, z, should always be centred on the note.

Ask learners to practise singing combination words on one pitch, e.g. 'late' on a minim.

Articulation and diction

- Demonstrate secure awareness of how to use the tongue, teeth, lips and palate in the clear and correct articulation and 'colouring' of words

Remind learners how to use the tongue, teeth, lips and palate to articulate and colour the words. Encourage them to understand that vowels need to be modified at the top of the range, e.g. an 'ee' (as in 'cheese') will require as much space as an 'ar' (as in 'car').



Consonants need to be fitted in before the beat. This particularly applies to clusters of consonants, e.g. 'Rex tremendae', and is particularly relevant when singing German, e.g. 'Klage'.

Ask learners to practise using the tongue to voice compound consonants, e.g. 'fl'.

Encourage learners to use voiced consonants to colour words as appropriate.

In order to differentiate between various articulations, encourage learners to sing a phrase legato, then repeat it staccato immediately. Ask them to describe the musical effect.

Ask learners to practise musical accents, as these will involve the use of the diaphragm.

Introduce songs in other languages. Begin by showing learners how to sing in Italian or Latin, as these languages create bright, open vowel sounds with no diphthongs

Ensure that learners fully understand the words and the correct pronunciation.



When singing in other languages, learners need to understand every word of the text and the correct pronunciation. It is suggested that they work with a language specialist, if possible.

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 song 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 song in the style of a well-known composer.



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!

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

Ask learners to improvise a cadenza for an aria or ornaments for a baroque or classical solo piece.

Demonstrate simple jazz patterns. Ask learners to improvise a jazz solo using a standard as a stimulus (e.g. 'I Got Rhythm'). Use scat-singing techniques where appropriate.



Scat singing is perhaps the most natural way into vocal improvisation.

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

Ask learners to compose pieces for more than one voice, e.g. a part song or solo voice and piano/other instruments.



Compositions for more than one voice/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 voices and instruments.

Support learners in refining, notating and evaluating their ideas.

Provide guidance on writing for instruments.

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

Programme of Study 5

D Singing music

P5 - D1

Understand the meaning and artistic intention of the text, including when singing in a foreign language

Before introducing a new song (including those in foreign languages), discuss with learners the artistic possibilities of the text, e.g. tone colour, word painting.

Ensure that learners have access to a word-for-word translation of any song or aria sung in a foreign language.

Encourage learners to find out about the context of the song or aria and to explore the poet's/author's intentions in order to inform their musical performance.



These activities are essentially for independent study and research.

P5 - D2

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

Encourage learners to sing 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.

Using a piano/keyboard, play a three- or four-part chord or simple chord progression and ask learners to sing the upper, inner and lower parts in turn; alternatively, allocate a part to each learner and ask for each chord to be sung 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

Sing a range of songs 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.
- discussing the nature of the accompaniment in respect of the style and period of the music, and its relationship to the text
- 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
- encouraging 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.
- 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 independently of singing them in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.

Continue to suggest appropriate practising strategies.

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



It is essential for vocal teachers and learners to have regular access to a piano/keyboard at this stage.

P5 - D4

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

Help learners to memorise selected songs 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. breathing, placing of voice 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

Provide opportunities for repeated singing 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 singing
- 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 sing at sight a range of songs 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 songs that contain elements of surprise and, with learners, formulate strategies for dealing with them.

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.



Stress 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 singing, 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 Singing with others

P5 - E1

Sing 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 singing, 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 singing. 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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