



The percussion curriculum now contains more content for djembes and Latin American percussion alongside the 2022 learning objectives and activities for drum-kit and orchestral percussion.

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

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

Programme of Study 1

A Listening and internalising

P1 - A1

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

Introduce learners to a wide variety of music during lessons.



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

P1 - A2

Have some aural perception of the music to be played

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



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

P1 - A3

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

P1 - A4

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

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



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

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



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

P1 - A5

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



Notation must be appropriate and take into consideration the learner, the instrument and the genre. Notations may include staff notation, rhythm grids, dot notation 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, hand position/grip and freedom of movement

- Play with some control of the body:
 - developing an appropriate and functional posture
 - sitting or standing in a way that enables freedom of movement
- Play with some control of the hands:
 - developing an appropriate stick/mallet grip, with relaxed wrists, arms and shoulders
 - developing an appropriate hand position when playing without sticks
 - developing an awareness of the parts that both hands play in hand percussion

Ask learners to observe and describe a good example of posture, demonstrated by the teacher or a more experienced learner.



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.



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

Ask learners to stand with feet slightly apart and practise shifting their weight from foot to foot.

To practise drum kit posture, encourage learners to sit upright towards the front of the stool/chair and to tap out simple rhythms using their toes while keeping their heels in contact with the floor.

Djembe players should sit upright towards the front of their chair and be able to reach the floor with their feet in order to hold the instrument successfully. For younger djembe players, ensure that the djembe is not too heavy or too big, otherwise this will make it difficult for them to hold the djembe with their legs and tilt it forwards.



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

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.



Ensure that the instruments are set up correctly and comfortably and at an appropriate height. Where the height of an instrument is fixed, adjust the height of the stools if appropriate and/or use blocks to raise the height of the learner or instruments. Where learners are supporting their instrument, e.g. djembe, ensure that this is done in a way that facilitates freedom of movement.



If music stands are used they should be suitably placed and at an appropriate height.



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

P1 - B2

Stick/mallet/hand control and position

- Play a range of simple, rudimental sticking patterns, e.g. rebound strokes and free strokes, with each hand individually
- Produce a clean sound (no buzzing) at a regular pulse on all instruments
- Play at a consistent stick/hand height
- Develop an appropriate instrument grip when playing handheld instruments

Using sticks, show learners an appropriate grip.



Learners should play with either matched or orthodox grip. When using matched grip, and for the right hand of orthodox grip, the sticks should be held with the thumb and first finger only. Ensure that wrists, arms and shoulders remain relaxed at all times. Any signs of tension restricting stick control should be corrected.

When playing with sticks, ask learners to practise picking up the stick from a flat surface, hands separately, using the first finger and thumb. This will help them to form an appropriate pivot point to allow freedom of

movement of the sticks.

Ask learners to play short, simple rhythms with:

- the back three fingers loosely in contact with the sticks
 - the sticks in line with the forearm or forming an inverted V shape when viewed from above
 - the sticks correctly balanced
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When playing, encourage learners to use an action similar to that of bouncing a ball, to develop rebound strokes.

When playing with hands (e.g. on djembes), encourage learners to use appropriate hand shape. Show them how to move between fingers together for the tone sound and fingers opened for the bass sound. Encourage them to think of pulling the sound out of the djembe, focusing on the upward movement.



Be aware of stamina when teaching beginners and include opportunities to rest the hands to avoid discomfort.

Ask learners to perform a beat while the teacher plays a solo over the top.

Show learners an appropriate instrument grip for handheld instruments such as tamborim, agogo bells, triangle, cymbals etc.

Show learners how to play alternating their left and right hands (e.g. on djembe).


P1 - B3

Quality of sound


- Develop some control of the position where the sticks or hands strike the instrument, recognising the effect that it will have on the quality of sound
- Have an awareness of the range of mallets, sticks, beaters and brushes available
- Develop a controlled sound at two or more dynamic levels

Demonstrate to learners how the position in which the hands or sticks strike the instrument changes the

sound. Encourage them to experiment.



On the djembe, introduce the bass sound and the tone sound.




Use copycat/call-and-response games, concentrating on where the sticks or hands strike the instrument.



Engage learners in a competition to see how many clean single strokes they can play in a row on a snare drum.




Ensure that both sticks rebound to the same height each time. The sticks should not be allowed to rest on the drumhead at any time, causing 'buzzing'.



When playing with sticks, encourage learners to aim to hit two spots stuck on to the drum, e.g. draw a face on a practice pad and aim to strike the eyes.




To facilitate striking in the correct place, encourage learners to keep a triangular shape between the sticks and their body.




Teach learners to play simple rhythms with their sticks kept low. Then, using the wrists, strike the instrument from a higher position.



Allow the natural weight of the stick to control the dynamic level.



Ask learners to choose ways of playing simple phrases using different dynamics.



Ask learners to choose ways of playing simple phrases using a range of sticks/mallets where appropriate.

Coordination and control of instruments and body

- Play the drum kit pedals with some control
- Begin to develop an awareness of context-specific movement
- Begin to develop an awareness of the parts that both hands play in handheld percussion
- Begin to develop instrument-specific independent movement of hands as appropriate to the instrument (e.g. tamborim)
- Use basic finger damping on the timpani and glockenspiel
- Develop, where appropriate, basic skills on a variety of auxiliary orchestral/Latin percussion instruments

On drum kit, encourage learners to imagine that the ball of their foot is glued to the pedal.



Encourage learners to keep the hi-hats tightly shut, using their foot.

Ask learners to tap feet alternately in time to live/pre-recorded music.

Encourage learners to explore movement as appropriate the style and tradition of the music being studied.

When playing the djembe, develop coordination by asking learners to add in gesture and movement, e.g. play with one hand and wave with the other.

Where appropriate to the musical style, develop learners' ability to combine singing with playing. For example, teach a traditional West African song with an accompanying clapped rhythmic pattern.

When playing timpani/glockenspiel, ask learners to practise playing one note, then dampen it with the back fingers of the same hand.



Encourage learners to dampen during rests and at the ends of phrases. When damping, ensure that the first finger and thumb maintain their grip on the shaft of the stick. Notes should be dampened in the same place on the instrument that they are struck.

Demonstrate the range of sounds produced by striking the timpani at different points across the head. Ask

learners to imitate and comment on the musical effect.

When using drum kit and timpani, ask learners to play four notes on each drum playing hand to hand, first leading with the strong hand and then with the weaker hand.

Programme of Study 1

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P1 - C1

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

Ask learners to explore different ways of making musical sounds to realise the potential of percussion instruments. Discuss the variety of sounds.



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

Encourage learners to improvise rhythms when leading copycat games, e.g. 'Don't play this one back'.

In whole-class or group teaching contexts, ask learners to play 'whatever they want' for 10 seconds at the start of a lesson. As well as encouraging creativity, this can provide a useful opportunity for the teacher to assess skills and technique.

Engage learners in a 'plug the gap' activity: in a whole-class or small-group situation, everyone claps a pattern for 4 beats and then leaves a 4-beat gap for learners to take turns in improvising using their current instrument.

On the drum kit, demonstrate and discuss the rules of basic fills, i.e. playing in time, playing in the style, playing for the required length of time. Ask learners to:

- discuss the rhythm patterns/notes available to them at this level
- make up short and simple rhythmic patterns from suggested musical starting points, e.g. rock rhythms/grooves, fills.
- repeat the process, selecting and discarding ideas and aiming for musical coherence, e.g. changing the bass drum or snare drum patterns in a rock rhythm/groove
- discuss the musical effect of the improvisation

- record and play back the improvised pieces to help discuss their effectiveness

In whole-class Latin American percussion sessions, develop traditional question and answer ‘calls’, where learners play an answer in unison to the teacher’s call.

P1 - C2

Make use of instrumental skills when beginning to compose

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



Through composing, learners are able to explore the music from the inside. Composing is valid in its own right, but it can also be used to develop performing skills, knowledge and understanding. It may be necessary to score 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.

Using rhythmic patterns learned with the teacher as a starting point, encourage learners to make decisions about structure and organisation to develop these patterns into their own compositions.

Provide opportunities for learners to perform their compositions to others.

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



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

Programme of Study 1

D Playing music

P1 - D1

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

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

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

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

Ask learners to play the complete rhythm/tune expressively to others.

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



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

P1 - D2

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

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

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



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

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



Encourage learners to sing back what they are about to play to help them internalise the rhythms and intonation.

In whole-class teaching, pass the beat around the room with learners taking it in turns, using body percussion or instruments. Start with a beat and then subdivide the beat into 2s and then 4s, both with and without a metronome.

With pitched percussion, ask learners to sing easy intervals and match them to notes on the instruments where appropriate.



At first, limit the phrase to be copied to four beats, using only two notes.

P1 - D3

Play short, easy pieces from appropriate notation/ symbols



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

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

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

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements.



Adopt the holistic approach to teaching and learning.

P1 - D4

Memorise with accuracy selected short, simple pieces from their repertoire

Help learners to memorise selected pieces from their repertoire by:

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

Teach learners appropriate language to describe the structure of a piece to aid with their memorisation – e.g. pattern, bridge, break, intro, ending etc.

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

Encourage learners to play from memory to other learners.



Playing from memory is an important and realistic expectation in learning pieces from the earliest stages. Promote confidence by making memorisation of whole pieces a natural part of the learning process. Bear in mind that they are unlikely to be memorised properly until the performance is technically fluent. Some objectives are:

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

P1 - D5

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



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

Play short, simple rhythmic/melodic patterns and ask learners to copy them.

Using flash cards, help learners to:

- recognise different note values and their rests
- clap, sing and play simple rhythmic/melodic patterns, maintaining a regular pulse, perhaps at different tempi
- name notes and find them on the instrument (note recognition, for tuned percussion)
- read and play simple dynamics
- read and play staccato and legato, e.g. on cymbals and timpani



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 pieces, using notation when appropriate. Ensure that its use is encouraging rather than discouraging.

For tuned percussion, devise a variety of games to explain staff notation to young beginners, e.g.:

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

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 1

E Playing music with others

P1 - E1

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

Create opportunities for learners to:

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



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

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



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

Ask learners to follow someone beating time.



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

P1 - E2

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

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

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

Programme of Study 1

F Performing and communicating

P1 - F1

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

Programme of Study 2

A Listening and internalising

P2 - A1

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

P2 - A2

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

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



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

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



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

P2 - A3

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

P2 - A4

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

Ask learners questions on the phrasing and structure of pieces.



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

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

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



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

P2 - A5

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

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

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

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



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

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



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



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

Programme of Study 2

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P2 - B1

Posture, hand position/grip and freedom of movement

- Play with more control of the body:
 - using an appropriate and functional posture
 - sitting or standing in a way that enables freedom of movement and weight distribution
- Play with more control of the hands:
 - maintaining an appropriate grip when playing with sticks/mallets, with relaxed wrists, arms and shoulders
 - maintaining an appropriate hand position when playing without sticks
 - developing instrument-specific independent movement of hands as appropriate to the instrument (e.g. tamborim)

Discuss the differences between good and poor posture. Ask learners to demonstrate good posture and to correct poor posture, either their own or that illustrated by the teacher.



Link posture to sound so that learners understand the purpose – e.g. with djembes, we must sit up to hold the djembe correctly, and we must tilt the djembe to get a better sound.



As the music becomes more demanding look out for lapses in posture, grip, hand position and tone production.

Encourage learners to play in front of a mirror to develop more awareness of 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.

Help learners to develop an awareness of how the instruments need to be set up/adjusted to facilitate playing.



It is important that the instruments are adjusted correctly to ensure that learners play with ease and control.

Ask learners to observe and listen to the teacher playing with the sticks held correctly and incorrectly (or, if playing without sticks, with different hand positions), listening to and evaluating the different sounds in various pieces.

Ask learners to observe and listen to the teacher playing on different points of the instrument(s), listening to and evaluating the different sounds.

On the drum kit, encourage learners to experiment with heel up and heel down bass drum techniques.



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

P2 - B2

Stick/mallet/hand control and position

- Develop a range of simple, rudimental sticking patterns, e.g. single strokes, double strokes (not buzzed or bounced) and single paradiddles, developing hand-to-hand sticking technique
- Produce a clean sound (no buzzing) consistently at a regular pulse on all instruments
- Play stick/hand patterns accurately at a range of different stick heights to vary dynamic range
- Play with an appropriate instrument grip when playing handheld instruments

Ask learners to imitate simple rhythms played by the teacher, maintaining good hand/stick technique and (where applicable) instrument grip.

When playing with sticks, teach learners to play simple exercises across different surfaces, using single strokes, double strokes and paradiddles with more fluency and at different tempi.



To prevent buzzing, the sticks should not remain on the drumhead at any time. Encourage learners to avoid the sticks accidentally touching each other.

When playing with hands (e.g. on djembes), encourage learners to develop an appropriate hand shape.

On the djembe, refine the technique of playing tone sounds with 4 fingers together and releasing them to play the bass sound.

Ask learners to play through exercises and pieces with only the weak hand/foot. Then ask them to repeat with both hands, but leading with the weaker hand.



Pay particular attention to the weaker hand/foot, ensuring that a relaxed action is used whilst maintaining a good clean sound.

Play, using double strokes:

- copycat games, i.e. ask learners to copy notes or short phrases played by the teacher
 - call-and-response games, i.e. answer a short phrase with a different one
-

Introduce fun competitions, e.g. 'Who can play paradiddles the fastest?'; 'Who can keep going the longest without making a mistake?' Apply the technique to pieces being learnt.

Hold another competition to see how many clean single strokes learners can play in a row at different tempi. Discuss the musical effect.

P2 - B3

Quality of sound

- Set up and tune the instruments (if appropriate, e.g. timpani, surdos) with support, developing an understanding of the reason behind tuning
- Play with more control of the position where the sticks or hands strike the instrument, developing some ability to adjust and effect change
- Develop awareness of the range of mallets, sticks, beaters and brushes available
- Play with a controlled sound at several dynamic levels

Ask learners to play familiar exercises from memory or by ear, observing where the sticks or hands strike the instrument.



Maintaining an even sound when moving between drums/notes often needs special attention.

With instruments such as congas and surdos, demonstrate to learners the effect that tuning has on voicing.

On the djembe, continue to develop the bass and tone sounds and introduce slap if appropriate.

Use copycat/call-and-response games, concentrating on where the sticks or hands strike the instrument.

Ask learners to play short phrases at specified levels, e.g. first phrase quiet, second phrase fairly loud, third phrase loud, adjusting the stick or hand height accordingly.



Ensure that excessive force is not used when playing loudly.



When playing with hands, be aware of stamina and include opportunities to rest to avoid discomfort.

Encourage learners to discover and develop ways of making a crescendo and diminuendo, e.g. on the snare drum, by moving the sticks further away from the body (towards 12 o'clock) to produce a softer sound.

Ask learners to play simple, well-known rhythms/tunes from memory, using different dynamics, e.g. a rock beat/folk-tune.

Ask learners to listen to and evaluate the tone quality produced by the teacher, other learners and themselves, analysing how improvements may be made.

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

Coordination and control of instruments and body

- Play the drum kit pedals with increased control
- Use finger damping on the timpani and Glockenspiel and awareness of pedal tuning mechanisms
- Further develop basic skills on a variety of auxiliary orchestral/Latin percussion instruments, incorporating moving between instruments

Ask learners to play 'walking feet' (right foot, left foot alternately) to basic rock patterns.



This can be the starting point for four- way coordination.

Play the drum kit with feet and hands out of balance dynamically and discuss the effect.

When playing with sticks, ask learners to practise playing and damping at quicker tempi.



Ensure that the first finger and thumb maintain their grip on the shaft of the stick when damping.

Ensure that learners practise basic playing and damping techniques on a range of instruments.



For optimum damping on the timpani, encourage learners to spread their back three fingers to cover as wide a surface area as possible. If no stand is available, a bass drum may be supported in a flat or upright position on two chairs facing each other. Placing a bass drum flat makes it easier to play and damp. A triangle may be easily suspended using a short piece of string and a bulldog clip clamped to a music stand.

Provide short, simple arrangements in which learners can play along to backing tracks and other recordings.



When using backing tracks with drum kit playing, make sure the balance is correct for the player and the listener.

Where appropriate to the musical style, continue to develop learners' ability to combine singing with playing. For example, teach a traditional West African song with some djembe playing in the rests.

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

For drum kit, encourage learners to develop an eight-, 12-, 16-bar sequence, changing the bass drum patterns and fills in each four-bar phrase.



Develop the awareness of the vital role of the drum kit as an accompanying instrument, i.e. providing support for the melody. When playing fills, it is often more effective for learners to use a simple rhythm with few notes, e.g. a flam instead of four semiquavers, rather than filling each beat.

For pitched percussion, ask learners to:

- improvise sections of a melody above a chord sequence played on the piano or a backing track, having first demonstrated the idea. (Focus on musical coherence and an awareness of expressive possibilities)
- play question-and-answer games with each other and/or the teacher
- develop improvisations within a simple structure and mood



Use simple chord patterns in the key of C, e.g. C/E/F/G or C/Am/Dm/ G. There are many backing tracks freely available online, as well as apps that will generate a backing track if you enter a sequence of chords, such as iReal Pro.

In whole-class Latin American percussion sessions, develop traditional question and answer 'calls', using more complex rhythms and rhythms in parts rather than in unison.

Demonstrate the idea of a 'sandwich rondo' and how episodes can be created in between the main tune. Ask learners to improvise the main tune whilst the teacher plays the episode. Swap roles: teacher plays rondo and learner improvises episodes. In group lessons, learners can share the roles.



Teachers might like to use this as an opportunity to reinforce attention to phrasing and melodic shaping.

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

Show learners how to build on ideas from pieces and improvisations and develop individual or group compositions. Starting points can be literary or visual stimuli, musical devices, including sequence, ostinato, riffs, and pieces listened to.



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

In whole-class lessons, put learners into groups and ask them to create a rhythmic pattern together. Explain that there will not be a group leader, but rather that they all need to work as a team.

For drum kit, give learners a skeleton plan and ask them to write above each bar whether it is to be a rhythm/groove or a fill.

Ask learners to explore musical ideas using their instruments, jotting down the main points. The drum kit is an excellent sound source for this.

In whole-class teaching or percussion ensembles, help learners to identify the particular roles that different instruments play and encourage them to apply this to their own compositions – e.g. the surdo keeping the beat and the agogo bell maintaining a rhythm in Afro-Brazilian music, or the roles of the dununba, kenkeni and sangban in the dundun section in West African music.

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

Help learners to refine and notate their pieces, 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 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 Playing music

P2 - D1

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

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

On pitched percussion, ask learners to work out straightforward scale patterns and arpeggios by ear, giving them a suitable starting note.

P2 - D2

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

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

Engage learners in more extended 'copycat' exercises, i.e. more notes, longer phrases, greater expressive detail, e.g. play a three-bar groove and a one-bar fill and ask learners to copy.

P2 - D3

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



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

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

Using rhythm flashcards with pulse backing tracks, ask learners to copy rhythms using words such as 'tea' and 'coffee'. Learners should gradually become more reliant on flashcards rather than the spoken word.

Ask learners to keep the pulse with body percussion while other students perform the flashcard rhythm on their instruments.

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

Show learners how to practise their pieces and make improvements, e.g. linking from rhythm/groove bar to fill bar and on to the next rhythm/groove bar.



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

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

P2 - D4

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

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



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

P2 - D5

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



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

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

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

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



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

Emphasise the importance of steady, fluent reading, i.e. maintaining a regular pulse, and of allowing mistakes to pass uncorrected.



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

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 pieces, 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 Playing music with others

P2 - E1

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

P2 - E2

Explore, discuss and convey the character of the music

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

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

Programme of Study 2

F Performing and communicating

P2 - F1

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

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

Refine pieces through simulated performances during instrumental lessons.



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



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

P2 - F2

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

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

Discuss strategies for overcoming nerves and solving problems.



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

Encourage learners to revise pieces from their repertoire.

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



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

Programme of Study 3

A Listening and internalising

P3 - A1

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

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

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

P3 - A2

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

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

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

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



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

P3 - A3

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

P3 - A4

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

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

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

Encourage learners to improvise short pieces using similar techniques.

P3 - A5

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 3

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P3 - B1

Posture, hand position/grip and freedom of movement

- Play with ease and control of the body:
 - using an appropriate and functional posture
- Play with ease and control of the hands:
 - maintaining an appropriate grip when playing with sticks/mallets, with relaxed wrists, arms and shoulders
 - continuing to develop instrument-specific independent movement of hands
- Develop an appropriate and functional three-/four-mallet grip for tuned percussion

Encourage learners to take some responsibility for setting up and adjusting instruments to an appropriate height where applicable.



Encourage learners to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Ask learners to evaluate each other's posture and hand position/grip, recognising any faults and suggesting how improvements can be made.

For drum kit, demonstrate 'stick across snare drum' for timbale/Latin/ rim-click style, ensuring that one end of the stick is in contact with the drumhead and the other end is in contact with the rim, a third of the way down the stick.



Country and western music can be useful for developing this technique.

When playing tuned percussion, demonstrate the different three- and four-mallet grips, (e.g. Stevens, Burton). Ask learners to play simple melodies/scales using the outside sticks only. Encourage them to practise moving the sticks together and apart by sliding them on a table.



Use shorter 'classroom' xylophone beaters to reduce strain on the wrists and fingers. Be careful not to strike the nodal point of the bar. Some chord work may be made easier by striking the end of the bar rather than over the resonators.

Ask learners to experiment with the weak hand leading and the use of paradiddles, etc. to avoid crossing hands.



Encourage learners to make decisions around which stickings will result in a musically fluent performance.

P3 - B2

Stick/mallet/hand control and position

- Play using a wider range of rudimental sticking patterns, including grace notes to enable clean performance of flams, drags and ruffs
- Develop an even single-stroke roll on the timpani, snare drum and tuned percussion or on djembes/other hand percussion
- Develop the buzz roll on the snaredrum
- Play even accents with both hands
- Move between different stick/hand heights within a pattern
- Maintain an appropriate instrument grip when playing handheld instruments

To introduce flams, ask learners to hold the sticks at the same height, striking the drum with them simultaneously; then hold one stick higher than the other and strike the drum using a similar action.



When playing flams, ensure that a clean sound is always produced (no buzzing). Be aware that the surface being played will affect the sound produced. Ensure that sticks do not move around the drum.

To introduce drags, ask learners to hold one stick higher than the other and play, allowing the lower stick to buzz as it strikes the drum.



With practice, the buzzed stroke of the drag should develop into a bounced double stroke.

For ruffs, encourage learners to develop the ability to play four quick notes to a slow, regular pulse, with a rest between each repetition. The tempo can be increased gradually.

Demonstrate the difference between flams, drags and ruffs. The speed at which basic rudiments are played should be gradually increased.



With flams, drags and ruffs, explain that each is the embellishment of a single beat.

Ask learners to play single strokes at the speed of two strokes per beat at 60 bpm, then four per beat, and finally eight per beat.



Eight strokes per beat at 60 bpm should be an acceptable single-stroke roll speed at this level.

Repeat the above exercise with both sticks at a low, medium or high height.

Ask learners to experiment playing a buzzed stroke by holding the sticks tightly and then more loosely to develop awareness of how this affects the sound produced.



The use of different stick heights will help to develop good control of dynamics. Ensure that the wrists remain relaxed.

Produce accents by lifting the stick higher prior to playing the stroke (idle hand high):

- playing semiquaver patterns with shifting accents
- playing accents in triplets and other odd-numbered groupings
- playing across two different surfaces



Make sure the upper arm and shoulder are not used to lift the stick higher. Give learners a musical example, e.g. 'Wipeout', to show how accents can be used to make music more exciting.

On the djembe, introduce closed sounds where one hand plays and the other rests on the djembe skin.

On the caixa, demonstrate Brazilian patterns with offbeat accents and then encourage students to play using their weaker hand for the accents.

Quality of sound

- Set up and tune the instruments (if appropriate, e.g. timpani) with some independence, retuning where necessary with support
- Play and damp with control of the position where the sticks/hands strike the instrument, adjusting and effecting changes to the quality and character of the sound, e.g. snare drum, cymbals (rolls, chokes, strikes and clashes)
- Make appropriate choices of sticks/mallets/brushes with guidance
- Play with a controlled sound across a larger range of dynamics, including controlled crescendos and diminuendos

Emphasise to learners the need to always strike drums and cymbals in the correct place, especially when moving around the drum kit.

Ask learners to practise tuning timpani to a given note.

Encourage learners to sing the required note, developing an aural awareness of the intervals of a perfect fourth and fifth.



Encourage the use of a reliable pitch source, e.g. keyboard or glockenspiel. Refer to well-known tunes when pitching individual intervals.

Ask learners to practise playing the crash cymbal with one hand and damping it with the other.

Demonstrate to learners how striking the cymbals with different parts of the stick, e.g. tip, shoulder and shaft, and striking them in different places, e.g. bell, middle and edge, affects the tone quality. Invite learners to experiment with different techniques, encouraging them to select the most appropriate in order to produce the sound required.



The emphasis should be on controlling the way in which instruments are damped. At this stage, learners should be able to keep hold of a stick in each hand whilst damping.

Discuss with learners the most appropriate sounds for the pieces they are learning.



Ensure that individual levels of dynamics are consistent within a piece and when playing in an ensemble.

P3 - B4

Coordination and control of instruments

- Play the drum kit pedals with increased control
- Play with some independence between the hands and feet on the drum kit
- Develop the technique of simultaneously damping one drum/note whilst playing another
- Develop the technique of simultaneously playing one drum whilst retuning others
- Develop skills on a variety of orchestral/Latin percussion instruments, planning for moving efficiently between instruments
- Further develop the breadth of instrumental skills, playing with increasing control and movement as appropriate for instruments

Ask learners to keep a steady quaver pulse on the hi-hat and practise opening and closing the cymbals on different beats. Add in other limbs one at a time to build up complete rhythms.



Ensure that the heels of each foot remain in contact with the pedals at all times to develop pedal control. Encourage learners to execute this technique slowly before increasing the tempo, and to consider the balance between parts.

Help learners to explore bass drum pedal techniques including heel-up, heel-down, 'rocking', burying the beater and bouncing the beater. Ask learners to experiment and encourage them to select appropriate techniques for the musical context.

Ensure that learners are secure with basic hand drum-strokes on one drum before proceeding to more complex patterns involving two or more drums.

For instruments producing a sustained sound, e.g. cymbals, timpani, remind learners to play the ends of phrases with appropriate damping.



Ensure that the sticks continue to strike the instrument(s) in the optimum position and that the hands damp in that position.

Ask learners to practise picking up the crash cymbals by grasping the whole strap with the fingers and thumb on top and as close to the bell as possible.



In orchestral situations, ensure that learners do not put their wrists through the straps on crash cymbals.

To avoid airlocks, encourage learners to practise playing the crash cymbals with the plates very slightly offset.



Encourage learners to dampen the cymbals by pulling them in to their stomachs rather than to their chests.

Support learners in planning their movement between instruments when playing multiple orchestral instruments within one piece, e.g. bass drum to cowbell to glockenspiel.

Demonstrate to learners how to move appropriately when playing requires it, e.g. changing octaves on the marimba.

Programme of Study 3

C Creating and developing musical ideas

P3 - C1

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

Regularly ask learners to make up improvisations:

- in particular styles, e.g. rock, rags, marches, folk-songs; draw on relevant musical devices from pieces being learnt where appropriate
- by varying a theme, exploring contrasts of elements, e.g. pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tonality
- using a free theme based on the mood or character of a piece, e.g. sense of autumn, clouds, jollity, sadness, open space, speed. This particularly applies to pitched percussion.
- exploring changes of time signature, e.g. 3/4 to 4/4 to 12/8, or specific rhythmic devices such as hemiola.



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

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.

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

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



Notation is likely to be used as a memory aid, first in shorthand (or graphic form) and then for performance.

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



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

Encourage learners to compose pieces with common structures using their established vocabulary of common drum beats and fills.

In whole-class teaching or percussion ensembles, help learners to identify where different instruments play a rhythm in unison and where they layer different rhythms. Ask them to apply this to their own compositions.

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



Some learners may be composing for GCSE/Nationals/BTEC/RSL or other qualifications. There are many natural ways in which instrumental teachers can liaise with classroom colleagues for mutual support.

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 Playing music

P3 - D1

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

With drum kit or other untuned percussion, encourage learners to build up by ear a repertoire of rhythms/grooves, e.g. rock, blues, Latin, jazz, country and western.

With pitched percussion:

- ask learners to work out by ear familiar tunes that are more challenging, e.g. longer, larger range, perhaps including some chromatic notes
- introduce learners to different modes, scales, blues patterns, etc. Ask them to experiment with various starting notes and to work out the key, structure, etc.



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

P3 - D2

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

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

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

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

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

P3 - D3

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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

P3 - D4

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

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

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

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

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



Aim to develop musical memory in a number of ways, e.g. automatic, aural, visual, cognitive, kinaesthetic.



Remind learners that a performance is secure when it is learnt thoroughly from memory, but they should guard against it becoming mechanical.



Beware of the tendency to increase the speed of the beat as pieces become more familiar.

P3 - D5

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



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

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

Continue to use flash cards to help learners recognise different note values and rests, turning the activity round so that the flash cards are used by learners to transcribe a rhythm performed by the teacher.

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

- identify important notational features of the music, e.g. tempo, time signature, key signature, accidentals

- note articulation, phrasing and dynamics
- when playing drum kit, 'air drum' round the kit to physically appreciate the change of drums
- clap or tap rhythmic patterns, perhaps including syncopated patterns
- tap the pulse while other learners tap the rhythm, and vice versa (and extend by challenging learners to tap the pulse with one hand and the rhythm with the other)
- notice the shape of the melody and the melodic range
- identify, from the notation, a range of intervals
- sing/hum a variety of intervals taken from the melodic line
- sing/hum the melodic line of appropriate phrases



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

Ask learners to 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 pieces for the first time.



Promote enjoyment and confidence by using metaphors to describe phrases and discussing the character of the music and the intended effect.

P3 - D6

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

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

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

- listening to different interpretations of music being learnt and discussing the effects, e.g. by the teacher demonstrating and/or the use of recordings

- analysing the structure of music being learnt and the implications for communicating this in performance
- discussing mood, meaning and emotions
- making links between technique and interpretation
- emphasising expressive features



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

Programme of Study 3

E Playing music with others

P3 - E1

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

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

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

Ask learners to maintain a separate part individually.



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

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



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

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

P3 - E2

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

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

to the character of the music.

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



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

Programme of Study 3

F Performing and communicating

P3 - F1

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



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

P3 - F2

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

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 4

A Listening and internalising

P4 - A1

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

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



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

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



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



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

P4 - A2

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

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

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

rubato, quality/variety of tone, etc.

P4 - A3

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

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

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

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



Whenever possible, use ensemble opportunities to explore different textures.

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



The emphasis is on intuition, imagination and curiosity.

P4 - A4

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

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

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

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



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

P4 - A5

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

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

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 4

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P4 - B1

Posture, hand position/grip and freedom of movement

- Play with more ease and control of the body:
 - using an appropriate and functional posture
- Play with ease and control of the hands:
 - maintaining an appropriate grip when playing with sticks/mallets, with relaxed wrists, arms and shoulders
 - developing personalisation of grip when playing with sticks/mallets, e.g. choice of matched grip or orthodox grip
 - continuing to develop instrument-specific independent movement of hands
- Maintain an appropriate and functional four-mallet grip for tuned percussion

Demonstrate the differences in posture that may be appropriate to reflect the mood and dynamics of the music, e.g. upper-body movement.



When teaching children, it is important to ensure that the height of instruments is adjusted accordingly as learners grow.

Use role-play to discuss and choose the most effective posture to achieve the required sound.



Ensure that any movement enhances the sound produced. The teacher/other learners can act as audience.

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



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

When playing with mallets/sticks, demonstrate alternative grips, e.g. matched (French/German/other) versus orthodox, and the effect that they may have on the sound produced. Ask learners to experiment.



Alternative stickings can be particularly useful when playing chords containing a mixture of diatonic and chromatic notes.

Ask learners to experiment with the weak hand leading and the use of paradiddles, etc. to avoid crossing hands. In four-mallet work, try alternative stickings, e.g. 1 2 3 4 versus 1 3 2 4, to avoid awkward arm movements.



Learners should independently make decisions around which stickings will result in a musically fluent performance.

P4 - B2

Stick/mallet/hand control and position

- Play using a wide range of rudimental sticking patterns, demonstrating a developing understanding of the mechanics involved (up strokes, down strokes, full strokes, tap strokes)
- Play using an even single-stroke roll on a range of instruments including timpani, snare drum, djembe, Latin percussion and tuned percussion
- Develop an even double-stroke roll on the snare drum
- Play even accents with both hands, using increasingly complex rhythmic patterns
- Maintain an appropriate instrument grip when playing handheld instruments

Introduce new rudiments to the pieces being studied, as appropriate.



Ensure that stick heights for a given stroke are mirrored from hand to hand.

Ask learners to identify rudiment patterns within a piece of music, e.g. flams, paradiddles.

Using appropriate exercises, encourage learners to increase the speed at which rudiments are played with control.

Use onomatopoeic words and phrases to help learners distinguish between rudiments, e.g. paradiddlediddle, ratamacue.



Playing one hand at a time allows learners to concentrate on producing the correct stroke.

Ask learners to play eight single strokes with the weaker hand, then eight with the stronger hand, then seven, then six, etc. working down to one, then back up to eight.

Demonstrate the difference between buzzed strokes and bounced double strokes. Ask learners to play:

- eight double strokes with the right hand, followed by eight with the left hand, then repeat
- eight single strokes, followed by eight bounced double strokes, then repeat
- double strokes with brushes and/or hotrods to develop back-finger technique
- double-stroke rolls with single-beat accents



Ensure that rolls do not contain accents, unless notated.

P4 - B3

Quality of sound

- Set up and tune the instruments (if appropriate, e.g. timpani, surdos) independently with an awareness of purpose, doing any retuning when necessary
- Play and damp with control of the position where the sticks/hands strike the instrument, adjusting and effecting changes to the quality and character of the sound in response to the musical requirements
- Make appropriate choices of sticks/mallets/beaters/brushes with greater independence, adjusting choices according to the range of the instrument
- Play with a consistent, controlled sound across a large range of dynamics, including *sf* and *fp*

Discuss, and where possible demonstrate, how to change a drumhead.

Encourage learners to practise retuning timpani to a wider range of intervals:

- with reference to a given pitch
- with the use of relative pitch

Play a short piece several times, demonstrating ways of conveying different musical moods and

characteristics. Ask learners to experiment in the same way.



Learners should now begin to make decisions about which techniques to use.

Ensure that learners develop an understanding of how different instruments produce their sound, and thus how playing techniques may need to vary, i.e. wherever possible, introduce learners to different types of stick/mallet and evaluate their appropriateness for different pieces and instruments.

Ask learners to practise *fp* rolls on cymbals, allowing the cymbal to settle before commencing the *p* aspect of the roll.



Ensure that learners:

- develop an awareness of the different roll speeds required
- do not overplay *sf* markings and possibly compromise the tone quality

Ask learners to practise soft cymbal rolls, giving a slight emphasis to the initial stroke to establish the sound.

P4 - B4

Coordination and control of instruments and body

- Play with increasing independence between the hands and feet on the drum kit
- Use various damping techniques as appropriate, including pedal damping on the vibraphone
- Efficiently retune while simultaneously playing other drums/other instruments
- Play, with confidence and greater control, a wide variety of orchestral/Latin percussion instruments, using a range of technical skills, e.g. finger rolls on tambourines, or a *cáscara* groove on timbales
- Plan for moving efficiently between instruments with greater independence

Ask learners to play just the snare-drum and bass-drum parts of complex drum kit rhythms, e.g. involving semiquavers, ensuring that they are played accurately and precisely. Later, add semiquavers on the high-hat to develop awareness of exactly where each snare-drum/bass-drum note should be placed.



At this stage, there should be more awareness of the relative dynamic levels of the different drum kit instruments so that a balanced overall sound is achieved.

To a slow pulse, ask learners to play series of notes or simple chords on the vibraphone or tubular bells, damping each one immediately before the next is played.



Learners need to develop awareness of the places where damping is desirable, e.g. chord changes, ends of phrases.

Encourage learners to practise finger rolls on a variety of surfaces, e.g. table-top, drumhead, using all fingers and both thumbs.



Be aware that if a learner executes a shake roll on the tambourine using their right hand, they will need to develop finger-roll techniques using their left hand, and vice versa. Issues of hygiene need to be remembered when licking fingers for thumb/finger rolls.



Encourage learners to play simple rhythmic exercises involving strokes on both the head and rim of the timbales, including a cáscara groove.

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

For drum kit, encourage learners to develop a given rhythmic phrase into an extended composition, applying techniques already acquired.



Rhythms may be incorporated in grooves, and then developed and extended within a musical style.

For pitched percussion, ask learners to improvise melodies above pre-determined harmonic patterns, using conventions and techniques within a chosen style, e.g. use sequences and ornaments when creating a quasi-baroque-style piece.



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

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



A melody using the Dorian mode in D could be improvised above an accompanying chord sequence, e.g. Dm7/Am7/Gm7/Am7.

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



Raga Bhupali



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

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

Make recordings of improvisations and discuss the outcomes with learners.

P4 - C2

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

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

- exploration of a particular aspect of technique
- two contrasting pieces, aiming for consistency of style within each piece, e.g. rock, swing
- a short piece for an ensemble, exploring aspects of textures, solos and accompaniments
- a solo piece with accompaniment, possibly evoking moods or feelings, e.g. clouds, pyramids, the evening, rush hour, dreams



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

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



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

When composing for a percussion ensemble, continue to support learners in applying their knowledge of the particular roles that different instruments play.

Encourage learners to experiment with creating new music through a fusion of two different styles.

Programme of Study 4

D Playing music

P4 - D1

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

On drum kit and other untuned percussion, encourage learners to build up by ear a repertoire of grooves/rhythms in a wider range of styles, e.g. swing, bossa nova, waltz.

On pitched percussion, ask learners to play by ear familiar tunes that include some simple chromatic writing and modulations.



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

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

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

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

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

P4 - D2

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

On drum kit and other untuned percussion, ask learners to play back phrases of a moderate length,

including more complex fills and rhythms.

On pitched percussion, 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.

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

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

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

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

In whole-class Latin American percussion lessons, encourage learners to lead the performance of learned grooves with stops, starts, and call and response sections.

P4 - D3

Play a variety of pieces of moderate difficulty



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

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

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

Continue to advise learners on practising strategies.

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



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



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

P4 - D4

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

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

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



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



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



Try to include some aspect of memorising in each lesson.

P4 - D5

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



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

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

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



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



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

P4 - D6

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 4

E Playing music with others

P4 - E1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Programme of Study 4

F Performing and communicating

P4 - F1

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

P4 - F2

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

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

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

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



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

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

Programme of Study 5

A Listening and internalising

P5 - A1

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

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

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



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



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

P5 - A2

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

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

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

P5 - A3

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

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

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

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

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

P5 - A4

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

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

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

P5 - A5

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

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

- phrases/pieces
- simple chords

then compare these with the actual sound when played.

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

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

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



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

Programme of Study 5

B Making and controlling musical sounds

P5 - B1

Posture, hand position/grip and freedom of movement

- Play with ease control and fluency of the body:
 - using an appropriate and functional posture
- Play with ease and control of the hands:
 - maintaining an appropriate grip when playing with sticks/mallets and foot technique for the style of the music, with relaxed wrists, arms and shoulders
 - further developing personalisation of grip when playing with sticks/mallets
 - further developing instrument-specific independent movement of hands
- Maintain an appropriate and functional four-mallet grip for tuned percussion

Continue to emphasise the importance of good posture and freedom of movement.



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

When playing with sticks/mallets, encourage learners to experiment with different grips and wrist actions to produce the most appropriate sound, e.g. use of back three fingers to control the sticks when playing soft timpani rolls/ride patterns, etc. Ask them to discuss and justify their decisions.

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

Continue to encourage positive body language when performing.



It is important to consider facial expression.



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

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

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



Encourage learners to attend a wide range of live performances where possible.

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

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

P5 - B2

Stick/mallet/hand control and position

- Play using the full range of rudimentary sticking patterns, demonstrating a full understanding of the mechanics involved (up strokes, down strokes, full strokes, tap strokes)
- Play accents with both hands, using complex rhythmic patterns
- Maintain an appropriate instrument grip when playing handheld instruments

Encourage learners to incorporate rudimentary sticking patterns into pieces to facilitate ease of playing where appropriate.

Through choosing appropriate exercises and pieces, continue to help learners to develop the speed at which they can play rudiments with control and accuracy.

Ensure that learners can distinguish between different roll types and their notation, e.g. trill sign and demisemiquaver abbreviation for closed and open rolls.



The type of roll used may be determined not only by the notation used but also the tempo required, adjusting stick heights when playing at faster tempi.

Ask learners to play eight single strokes with the weaker hand, then eight with the stronger hand, then seven, then six, etc. working down to one, then back up to eight, at faster tempi.

P5 - B3

Quality of sound

- Set up and tune the instruments (if appropriate, e.g. timpani, surdos) independently with a clear understanding of purpose, doing any retuning when necessary
- Play and damp with control of the position where the sticks/hands strike the instrument, adjusting and effecting subtle changes to the quality and character of the sound in response to the stylistic and musical requirements
- Make appropriate choices of sticks/mallets/beaters/brushes with independence, changing between them fluently as appropriate to the music
- Play with a consistent, controlled sound across the full dynamic range, appropriate to the music being performed and the acoustics of the surroundings and the size of the ensemble

To facilitate performance, experiment with different instrument layouts for multi-percussion pieces.



As well as finding a suitable layout for the instruments, care must be taken to ensure that stick changes are possible and that all instruments can be played effectively, making appropriate choices for natural strokes, rim clicks, and rim shot.

Show learners how to retune one pedal timpani while continuing to play another.

Play a short piece in several different venues, e.g. practice room, hall, outdoors, to enable learners to evaluate the ways in which acoustics affect the sound produced.

Ensure that learners practise playing at different dynamic levels in a range of venues, and that they adjust their dynamics in accordance with the size of the ensemble they are performing with.

Coordination and control of instruments and body

- Play with complete independence between the hands and feet on the drum kit
- Use the full range of damping techniques as appropriate
- Develop efficiency and fluency of simultaneously playing one drum whilst retuning others
- Play with control and confidence, an extensive range of orchestral/Latin percussion instruments

On drum kit, ask learners to maintain a steady ride-pattern whilst adding phrasing on the bass drum, snare drum and tom-toms as appropriate (jazz comping).



By this stage, learners should be familiar with the whole range of different drumming styles.

Introduce learners to the basic playing techniques of a wide variety of auxiliary orchestral/Latin percussion instruments.

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



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

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 drum solo/cadenza within a piece.

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

For pitched percussion, explore techniques involved in modulating and apply them in improvising.

Link improvisations to repertoire being studied, e.g. learners make up a short rag in the style of Scott Joplin.



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 for the learner!

For pitched instruments, teach a well-known jazz standard, e.g. 'I Got Rhythm':

- play learners a recording of the piece
- familiarise them with the 32-bar A A B A form and teach them the chords and melody. Play it with them as a learner/teacher duo, swapping roles
- demonstrate how to embellish the melody freely and encourage learners to do the same when their turn comes
- finally, ask them to improvise over the chords, making fewer references to the original melody



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

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

P5 - C2

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

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



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

Support learners in refining, notating and evaluating their ideas.

Challenge learners to explore their chosen style through using more complex structures, more syncopation, and longer phrase lengths.

Provide guidance on writing for other instruments/voices.

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

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

Programme of Study 5

D Playing music

P5 - D1

Work out by ear how to play pieces of increasing complexity

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

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

On tuned percussion, ask learners to practise playing a familiar piece, e.g. 'Happy Birthday', in a variety of keys.

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

Ask learners to work out by ear some possible harmonies for well-known tunes.



Transposing by ear is an important tool for the advanced musician.

P5 - D2

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

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

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

On drum kit and other untuned percussion, ask learners to play back phrases of an extended length, including more complex fills and rhythms within a range of styles.

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

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



Before playing chords, it may help to sing or hum the notes/individual parts.

P5 - D3

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



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

Continue the holistic approach to learning new pieces by:

- enabling learners to research background knowledge of style, period, etc.
 - discussing the structure, harmonic/rhythmic language, etc.
 - ensuring that technical skills are applied to the musical context
 - devising related listening exercises that support the learning and memorisation of key features of the music
 - encouraging learners to explore alternative ways of interpreting pieces, taking into account their knowledge of genre and period, e.g. approaches to style, ornaments, cadences, phrasing and 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 away from the instrument in order to consider the overall character, the shape of phrases, subtleties of tempo, etc.

Continue to suggest appropriate practising strategies.

P5 - D4

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

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

- devising ways of visualising the music, ranging from imagining a simple picture outline to a more photographic image
- relating memory to touch and movement, e.g. changing grip position of sticks and shifting pedal action of kit to heel
- 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 rhythm/groove changes, key changes and sequences, consciously remembering deviations and exit points



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

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



By memorising the music, many performers are able to:

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

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

P5 - D5

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



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

Provide sight-reading practice in music that features a wide range of rhythmic and melodic devices, e.g. syncopated jazz rhythms and a variety of subdivisions where the rhythms are 'straight'. Include pieces that contain elements of surprise and, with learners, formulate strategies for dealing with them.

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

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

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



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



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

P5 - D6

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

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

Explore alternative ways of interpreting the directions of the composer.

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

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

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

Programme of Study 5

E Playing music with others

P5 - E1

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

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

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

Invite individual learners to take the lead and direct others.

Acknowledge unexpected musical outcomes.

Provide a variety of performing opportunities.



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

P5 - E2

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

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

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

Programme of Study 5

F Performing and communicating

P5 - F1

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

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



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

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

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

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

Give learners opportunities to practise their presentational skills.



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

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

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

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

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

P5 - F2

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

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

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



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

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



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



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