



Musical Understanding and the Model Music Curriculum

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Musical understanding: key aspects



- ‘The content of the music lesson should aim to develop musical understanding in all pupils’

John Paynter, Music in the Secondary School Curriculum

- Knowledge ‘of’ music

to distinguish it from

- Knowledge ‘about’ music
(ie theory, musical elements / dimensions, facts about composers, etc)
- Knowledge ‘how to’ music
(ie practical skills of performing, composing, etc)

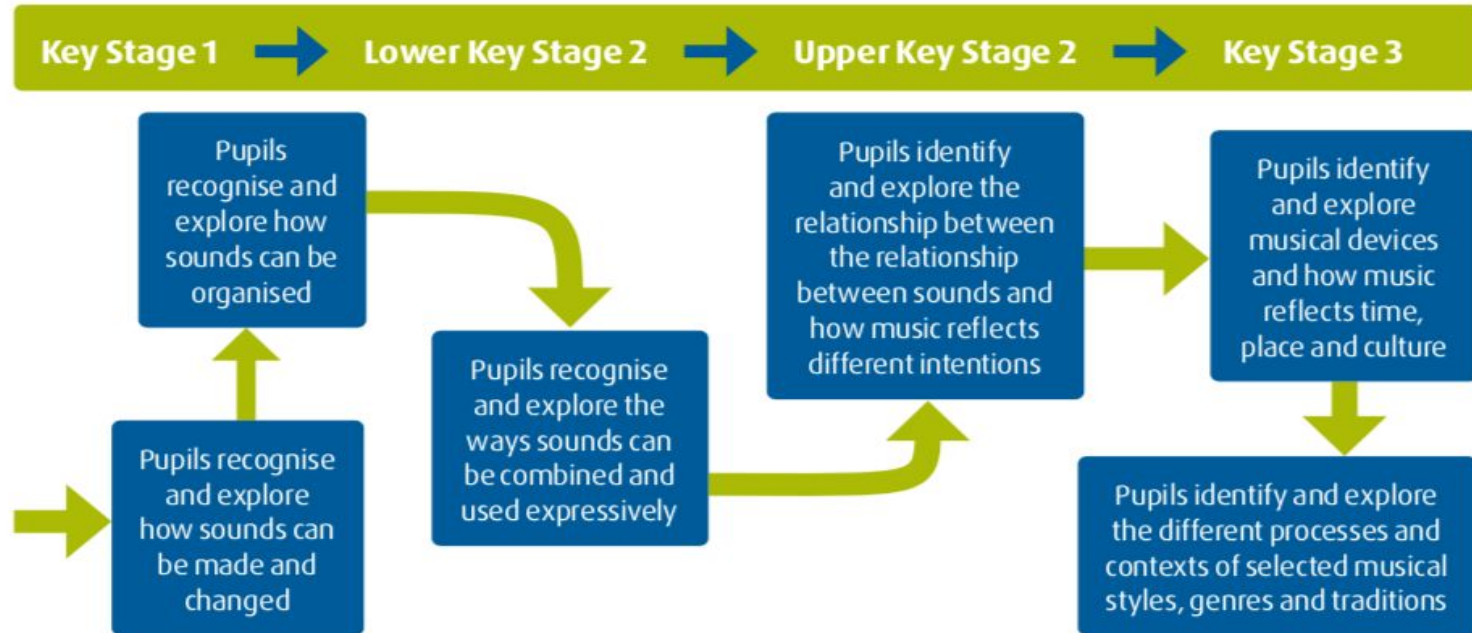
Musical understanding: a definition



- Musical understanding is the outcome of both what we internalise and how we internalise it when we engage with music. This happens whether we are playing / creating music, or listening / responding to music; and it leads to a personal understanding of how music ‘works’ – whatever type of music it is we are engaging with’

Hampshire Music Service

Musical understanding: progression



Redesigned from wider still, and wider⁸⁰

‘Another, simpler model of effective planning for musical progression across phases started with the ‘big idea’ in each National Curriculum level statement. This approach enabled teachers to understand very clearly how pupils’ musical understanding might develop over time’

Ofsted: Music in schools: wider still and wider

Musical understanding: its importance



- A strong but **simple** framework
 - ‘The heart of the music curriculum is the musical understanding which can be developed and demonstrated through all activities’ QCA 2001
- Why **this** aspect of learning **now** . . .
- Aligns with the processes of a ‘knowledge’ curriculum:
 - **All** students can achieve **all** the learning
 - Enables effective intervention and catch-up
 - Differentiation through **breadth**, not **depth**

Musical understanding: its impact



- Practical outcomes are richer and more musical
- Students secure their learning (including practical work) more quickly and retain it for longer
- Improved personalised learning
- Marked uptake of instrumental learning, ensemble membership and KS4 option numbers

Musical understanding: further reading



www.ism.org/professional-development/resources/musical-understanding/resources