



**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
Faculty of Health, Education  
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**Services**  
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Music Service

Services for Education Music Service

# *Musical Inclusion*

By

Dr Victoria Kinsella

Professor Martin Fautley

Sophie Gray

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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet recognises the increasing importance of developing inclusive pedagogies in music education. All learners have the capacity to engage and participate in musical learning. However, to be an inclusive teacher requires a deep understanding, and knowledge of individual learner's specific educational needs, alongside the confidence to try out strategies that will support progress and progression.

This booklet investigates the practices of a wide range of teachers working in diverse and challenging contexts. It offers insight into their inclusive pedagogical approaches and strategies they perceived to increase success for their learners through descriptive vignettes. These vignettes allow us to explore learning within the classroom, the challenges the teachers faced, and also their pathways to inclusive pedagogies. It concludes with a discussion that offers some reflective thinking points. We hope these will inform planning, and allow you opportunities to reflect in and on your learning strategies and pedagogical approaches.

## WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

This booklet is written for teachers across a range of age groups and contexts. You might be a newly qualified teacher, a trainee working towards a teaching qualification, an experienced teacher, or a member of SLT. You could be working in a primary school, secondary school, post-16 College, a special school, or out of school music organisation. In this booklet we hope to present some strategies, and address current educational challenges regarding inclusion. Through this booklet we hope to show you what inclusive practice could look like in your learning environment, and offer some points for reflection on pedagogical approaches.

## ETHICS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

In accordance with the British Education Research Association (BERA) guidelines on ethical practice, all learner's names have been anonymised and changed in this booklet, we have, however, named the actual teachers who have so freely given of their time and expertise.

We would particularly like to thank the schools involved in the development of this booklet; Fox Hollies School, James Brindley School, Reynald's Cross School, Wolgarston High School, Heart of England School and Calthorpe School. Thanks are also due to the teachers and academics who have shared their insights with us; Emily Tully, Amy Swallow, Suzie Reid, Gemma Mills, Emily-May Roebuck, Anthony Anderson, Sarah Henton, Gary Spruce and Nikki Booth, and those too numerous to mention specifically by name at this point. Finally, we would also like to thank OHMI ([ohmi.org.uk](http://ohmi.org.uk)) who have helped in the development of this booklet.

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## WHY IS INCLUSION IMPORTANT?

The 'inclusion' agenda has become a prominent feature in UK educational policies and school improvement programmes. The term 'inclusion' refers to all children achieving and participating despite challenges stemming from poverty, class, race, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage or gender. Inclusion in education refers to practices that allow all learners to achieve and participate despite challenges. UNESCO states that inclusive education is:

...concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a problem. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 7)

Inclusion can differ from context to context, and even within the same context. It can refer to many different types of learners, those with special educational needs, disabilities, those who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, and those who are at risk of exclusion.

Inclusive curricula should address all learner needs including cognitive, emotional, social, and creative development. Within an inclusive curriculum ought to be the potential to be flexible, so that teaching and learning can be adjusted to meet the needs and interests of all learners. Many curricula are predicated on all learners learning the same things, in the same way, at the same time, using the same methods. Being flexible is hard work, especially in the current education system where we know there are many time and assessment pressures. However, as teachers we are always seeking the best approaches for our learners, and seeking solutions to integrate practice with policy.

Teachers are integral to making a difference, especially for those learners who find it more difficult to engage, or may be excluded. Inclusive practices in the classroom therefore begin with the teacher recognising each learner's needs, and utilising pedagogies and curricula that equip all learners with knowledge, skills, and understanding. Practices that empower improve educational opportunities.

## MUSICAL INCLUSION AND POLICY.

Teaching and learning in music is a complex and contested area. We know that learning happens in multiple ways in differing contexts (*inter alia* Jeanneret & DeGraffenreid, 2012; Hallam, 2001; Hallam & Creech, 2010). With regards to disability, we know that the social and medical models of disability affect how disability is conceptualised. As Shakespeare observes:

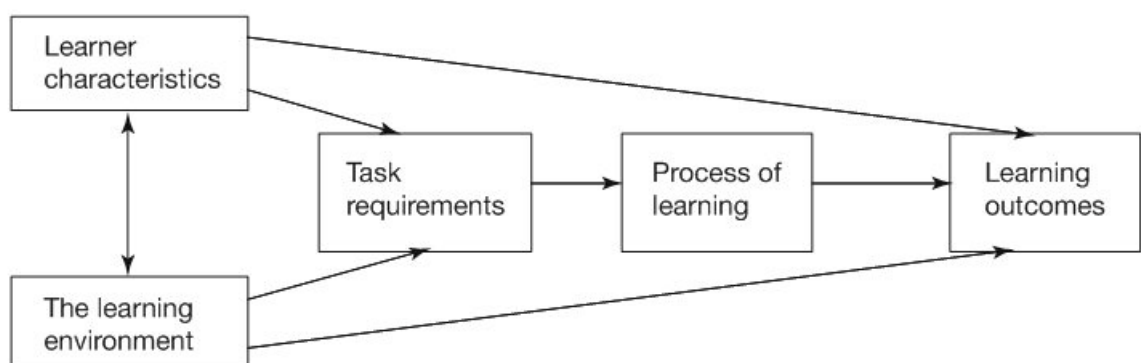
The social model demonstrates that the problems disabled people face are the result of social oppression and exclusion, not their individual deficits. This places the moral responsibility on society to remove the burdens which have been imposed, and to enable disabled people to participate (Shakespeare, 2006 p.199).

Music Education in England is characterised by two main approaches to teaching and learning. These are generalist music lessons in schools, and specific instrumental music lessons. Whilst there are many overlaps between the two, Whole Class Ensemble Tuition (WCET) being a case in point (Fautley et al., 2017), nonetheless these distinctions can be seen in the day-to-day lives of schools, pupils, and music teachers. The issues associated with teaching and learning in music are such that no clear singular methodology or system can be seen to be operating in everyday practices in schools.

Susan Hallam (2001) describes a range of aspects that need to be taken into account when considering learning in music.

Learners bring to the learning situation a complex set of prior learning experiences and the support available to them in their family environment. Once in the learning situation, their learning will be further influenced by the teaching environment, what they are expected to learn, how it is to be assessed, and their teacher and his or her methods. Learning outcomes are also determined by the nature of the learning task to be undertaken and the processes which are adopted to achieve the desired end. (Hallam, 2001 p.63)

Hallam also represents this diagrammatically:



These aspects are important when considering most forms of learning interactions in music education. However, it is also likely to be the case that as Adam Ockelford observed:

Whatever the context in which it occurs—special or mainstream—music education for children and young people with complex needs is still a pedagogical infant (Ockelford, 2008 p.3).

In other words, we still need to know more about it!

In the last 10 years there has been a drive for inclusion in English education policies. Schools are under increasing pressure to promote inclusive learning and teaching, and offer an educational experience that addresses individual needs and equality of opportunity. In music education, particularly in primary schools, teachers and schools have been tasked with responding to the diversity of learners. One of the main aims of the national plan for music education (NPME) in England (DfE & DCMS, 2011) was for:

Children from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument; to make music with others.

And the NPME acknowledged inclusion by asking for:

... equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of race, gender, where they live, their levels of musical talent, parental income, whether they have special educational needs or disabilities; and whether they are looked after children.

Musical inclusion involves giving learners, who may otherwise be overlooked, or face barriers to learning the opportunity to explore, engage, and broaden their musical horizons. As well as musical engagement, it is a commonly-held belief that musical participation has the potential to offer young people a range of emotional and social benefits (Pitts, 2005).

For musical inclusivity to be meaningful there have to be opportunities for learners to be supported as musicians across all genres and styles, by teachers who are equipped to help them reach their musical potential. However, for many children, the problem of real inclusivity in music education is failing to be addressed.

## TEACHER AND ACADEMIC INSIGHTS.

In this booklet, we offer insights through vignettes and think pieces, from a number of teachers and academics from a range of educational settings, working with different learners with complex and diverse needs. The vignettes reveal their beliefs and approaches to inclusive teaching and learning in their settings. They also allow us to explore perceptions of inclusive pedagogies.

In these vignettes, the teachers and academics discuss what underpins their thinking and planning, and what they do in response to try to address challenges of developing an inclusive pedagogy. In this booklet we hope to address some of the issues and challenges you may face when working with learners who are at risk of exclusion, and focus attention onto practices and strategies that may help these learners be more successful and progress.

To help support you and your learners, we offer some reflective questions for consideration after each vignette. We have separated the questions into some of the different contexts in which you might be working; special schools, mainstream schools, whole class ensemble teaching (WCET), and one to one tuition (1 to 1). However, just because a question is labelled like this does not mean it is only appropriate in that context, and it is worth thinking through what will be appropriate for you, in your context, and with your learners.

We hope that these questions will help you reflect in and on different pathways for providing and promoting positive learning experiences, and also help you think about possible ways of trying to engage learners who are most at risk of exclusion.

*Don't be afraid to talk and share, if the answers to educational problems were simple, we would know them already!*

# THINK PIECE 1

## CONTEXT: REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT BY GARY SPRUCE

Whilst acknowledging that the term 'special education needs' has wide application and includes those young people who have exceptional musical ability, in this short think piece SEN will be taken to mean those who, through some form of cognitive, psychological or physical impairment, require special arrangements to be made so that they might fully be included within the formal music curriculum in schools.

I have chosen the phrase 'included in the curriculum' here rather than the more usual 'access the curriculum', as the latter suggests curriculum as something that is pre-determined, fixed and immutable, rather than dynamic, flexible and responsive to young people's musical needs. I prefer this latter understanding of curriculum because not only does it provide a framework for thinking of curriculum as *emerging* from the interplay of 'music', teachers and learners within unique music education settings, but also because it represents the reality of curriculum enactment even where the curriculum is a 'handed down', official document. As Bernstein (2000) has pointed out, formal curricular are recontextualised in each educational setting by teachers and pupils in different ways according to each individual and unique setting.

For me, 'inclusion in the curriculum' carries with it the notion that the young person is enabled to exercise agency over what and how they learn music. This sense of agency is important for all young people and in all subjects, but is particularly important for music which for many young people is an important part of their subjectivity; their sense of self. However, it is the aspect that is perhaps most easily lost with those young people who have SEN particularly when we focus primarily on them 'accessing the curriculum' or simply providing adapted or bespoke resources to enable such access.

Jellison (2012, 67), suggests that music classrooms and curricular that are most likely to be inclusive ones for those young people with SEN are those that:

- Resonate with musical meaning for young people, are sufficiently flexibly to meet their needs but make only those adaptations that are absolutely necessary from what others are doing;
- Involve young people in musical activities that are socially and culturally recognisable as music, enable them to make music with other young people and ensure music is part of their daily lives;
- Provide safe environments which support musical self-determination through young people becoming musical decision makers and music-makers;
- Allow young people to interact musically with their peers in ways that are 'positive and reciprocal' i.e. that the musical contributions of young people with SEN are engaged with as of equal value to those of non-SEN young people
- Evolve from collaboration among all significant individuals in a young person's life including the young person themselves.

What comes through all of this is the central importance of curriculum and music settings enabling all young people to exercise agency and act as musical decision makers in the making of music, including those with SEN. This, Jellison seems to be suggesting is through curricular and programmes which emphasise not the differences between musical learners but rather their commonalities.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- Do you offer young people opportunities to interact musically with their peers?
- Do you offer non-specialist music teachers the opportunity to join in and interact with young people through musical communication?

### MAINSTREAM

- What are the inclusion policies in your school?
- In light of this policy, how do you plan for inclusion in the curriculum?

### WCET

- In what ways do you offer young people agency in the lesson?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Do you offer young people the opportunity to make decisions in lessons?
- Are you flexible in your planning to allow space for musical meaning making?

## REFERENCES

Bernstein, B (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*. Oxford. Rowman and Littlefield.

Jellison, J.A. (2012) 'Inclusive Music Classrooms and Programmes' in McPherson, G & Welch, G (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education* Vol 2 pp: 65-80. Oxford. Oxford University Press



# VIGNETTE 1

## CONTEXT: SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL

John is 16, with autism which affects his ability to communicate verbally; he has a limited range of vocabulary of around twenty five words. Any other words John says are echoes of what he last heard. John also has OCD tendencies, and can display violent behaviour when distressed. John likes routine. I knew breaking his habits is where my challenge would begin. John has favourite words, these are used throughout his school life to celebrate his achievements. I decided to see if I could use one of them to increase John's engagement. One morning John entered the room and sat in the circle as usual; he appeared settled, so today was the beginning of my new plan. Before John had chance to move to his favourite fire-exit position, I invited him to turn his chair around to face the keyboard, he looked at me with his usual sway then stood up and marched passed me to his usual spot, much to my disappointment. I wasn't going to give up that easily. I sat at the keyboard next to an empty chair and played a C major chord whilst singing "excellent" and pounding the chord on each syllable to begin John's personalised song. "Excellent" is John's favourite word.

John looked at me; he continued to sway. As I repeated the one-word-one-chord song, John became more responsive; he looked at me and suddenly shouted "excellent" in his usual tone; my cue to repeat and continue. After a few more rounds of "excellent", I tapped the chair next to me. John rose from his carpet patch, marched over and filled the empty chair. I played "excellent" again, John shouted "excellent". John surprisingly played a beautiful glissando from the top to the bottom of the keyboard, I mimicked his sound. Singing "excellent" again, I pointed to C. John tapped C and said "excellent". John was beginning to understand how to communicate with me using sounds via his vocabulary. Over the following weeks, John continued to progress at his keyboard lessons. John could soon play a C major chord to the rhythm of the "excellent" song whilst singing "excellent". He developed to playing a C major scale by ear and knew where to start and stop to make it sound complete. John developed his musical understanding and communication by replicating sounds; on his terms.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- What would you have done?
- Do you have children like John that you teach? What strategies do you have for this?

### MAINSTREAM

- What can the rest of the class do whilst you are dealing with John?
- Do you have starter activities available that can get the whole class in a learning mind-set?

### WCET

- Do you have 'emergency' strategies to hand just in case things are not going to plan?
- How will you organise the rest of the class whilst ensuring John is included?
- Have you shared planning and activities with TAs?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Are there times when personal and/or social matters take precedence over musical learning?
- How do you deal with these?

## VIGNETTE 2

### CONTEXT: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LESSON

Sarah has hemiplegia, a type of cerebral palsy which damages the part of the brain that controls muscle movements. As a result, she has limited control of one side of her body. The OHMI one-handed Trumpet has allowed Sarah to control the valves with her functioning hand without having to hold the instrument with the other. Sarah can often get distracted during our lessons. She asked questions regarding things in the room, outside the window, and about the Trumpet although she would not necessarily listen to the answers. This may have been (possibly subconsciously) a way for her to put off playing the Trumpet, as it was something she found difficult. She could not blow a constant stream of air or form an embouchure, and had difficulty pressing the valves down fully.

I experimented with ideas and it has taken time and patience to find a structure and system that works for her. There are various things I do, which in combination have helped to keep Sarah engaged and make progress:

- I break up every lesson into three or four short activities, which I write on the whiteboard at the start of each lesson. Sarah ticks off each activity on the whiteboard once we have finished exploring it. This allows her to see where we are in the lesson, gives her multiple opportunities to 'achieve' and provides an incentive to focus on each activity.
- I try to give specific praise and aim to improve on her skills in a positive way. I use competitions, games, record setting and give her plenty of chance to take the lead.
- We explore other aspects of music such as composition, musical games, singing, listening and learning musical terms.
- I try to turn the distractions into contributions. That way she is more likely to engage because she has created the theme and it keeps the learning environment positive rather than telling her to stop.
- She loves playing to an audience and is more focused when someone watches her play.
- Having fun in lessons and developing a mutual respect has helped to create a positive learning environment.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- Does having a range of shorter activities help with attention? How do you know when to change?

### MAINSTREAM

- How can you provide performance opportunities in an inclusive way for all pupils in your classes?
- Primary schools use assemblies for this, what can KS3 children and young people do that might be similar?

### WCET

- How long do the learning episodes in your WCET class last?
- Do you have a range of pedagogic approaches that utilise the same materials?

### 1 TO 1 TUTOR

- Sarah's teacher talks of her looking out of the window. How important is teacher-pupil relationship when trying to develop musical learning?

## VIGNETTE 3

### CONTEXT: MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOL

My pupils have a wide range of PMLD and health conditions for which I had done no SEND training whatsoever. It really was quite daunting at first. However, I quickly came to understand that this was absolutely fine. The school wasn't expecting a SEND expert, but a music specialist. I realised that I had to slow down and use a lot of pupil-led lessons, and fact finding from staff to work out how to approach each pupil. I have figured out a few key strategies:

- Communication with staff members. These are the people who have a link with home and know the child best in school. Then you can discover how your pupil's day/week/journey to school has been and at the end of the lesson you can share how that session has been.
- I use lots of pictures similar to the Pecs (picture exchange communication system) and Makaton signing/symbols as visual prompts.
- Finding out a pupil's favourite music is also helpful.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- How is music viewed in your school?
- Do you have a music specialist?
- Do you have a music therapist?
- What unique communication opportunities can you give your PMLD students through music?
- Can these opportunities be given throughout the curriculum/school day, not just in discrete 'music' lessons?

### MAINSTREAM

- Being a classroom music teacher takes all your time and energy. Can you find ways to discuss with colleagues on a whole-school basis about your learners?
- How far away is the staffroom to do this? Maybe schedule a coffee break there when you have a 'free' after, if you spend your break times normally in the music cupboard?

### WCET

- How do you think about breadth of curriculum coverage and depth of developing expertise in what you are teaching?
- Which matters most?
- How do you change between them?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Having very little time in a school is a problem, especially when you visit a lot of schools too. How can you find ways to talk to teachers at a time that is convenient for both of you?
- Have you asked class teachers when might be good for them?

## VIGNETTE 4

### CONTEXT: SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL

This is a KS3 group of 10 children. 8 with severe learning difficulties, and 2 with profound and multiple learning difficulties. I soon realised creating an effective learning environment would be a complex job.

This class had one of the most diverse mixes of abilities and challenges I had experienced. For example Adam in my group could speak, in fact never stopped talking, and could easily sing whole songs that he knew, as well as being capable of making up his own. Sarah could play a drum in time, but could not differentiate between pitches. Amin had a very short attention span and was generally not motivated by music - getting him to sit was often an achievement in itself. Then Hussain and Nadia who had profound and multiple learning difficulties were also wildly different from one another. Hussain loving the noise and chaos of a busy classroom, though prone to mood changes. Nadia was generally very sensitive to noise and would ordinarily get very distressed in this environment. Through working on a pre-composed song, I tried to give appropriate opportunities. For the first few weeks we listened to the song, practised playing in time, explored rhythms, and investigated the most accessible and motivating instruments for each student.

By the final week of term Sarah could play rhythms on the drum and followed louds and softs, Amin played the ukulele in his seat, tuned to the key, as he was very motivated by the instrument but unable to create chords or use pitch. Adam sang the song with a microphone and added in his own flourishes and improvisations. Hussain was in the centre of the group with a frame drum which he was able to play easily and could be immersed in the sounds around him. Nadia was placed outside of the group on the piano, a very motivating and accessible instrument for her but also far removed enough to not get too distressed by the loud noises of the group.

Though it seemed an impossible task, through getting to know the children, their preferences and motivations, abilities and needs, I was able, over time, to give them all the opportunity to access music and to play and interact effectively with each other.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- What opportunities are there for the music specialist to find out about the pupils before starting to teach them?
- What will you do with this information?

### MAINSTREAM

- Sometimes not all learners will work well together. It is important to recognise this and seek help and support. What was the role of music in bringing these young people together?

### WCET

- What are the differences in learner interests?
- What genres or styles of music could bring this group together?
- Do you ask the children and young people about what they might like to do?
- What could you do with this information?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Do all your learners follow the same programme?
- How could/might you allow for individual differences in musical tastes and preferences? Should you?



## VIGNETTE 5

### CONTEXT: INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENTAL LESSON IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL

Josh had been identified for 1 to 1 input because he hadn't progressed in other areas and seemed motivated by music. Severely autistic and non-verbal, Josh was very active, restless, and obsessed with routine. He had issues with loud sounds, being very sensitive to some, especially other children crying, and when he got distressed he could become very aggressive towards others and also himself.

Over two months in, sessions were going okay, Josh would sit at the piano for the majority of the sessions sometimes for up to 30 minutes. On the whole he seemed motivated and engaged with the piano, exploring the keys with his hands, elbows and face. The problem was that he didn't like me playing or sitting too close, and though it was essential to initially give him this time and space, it had got to the point where I felt that for him to progress we needed to work together. I didn't have chance to even play a welcome song, Josh wanted to play straight away and would continually push me away and take my hands off the keys. I would occasionally play a motif or short idea for him to listen to/copy but the interaction would be very brief and then again he would show he didn't want to share the piano.

I realised that I needed to find something so irresistible to Josh that he couldn't help but allow me to continue to play. I tried many things. His mom had told me that he loved it when his dad played 'Wheels on the bus' at home, I tried pop songs that he heard or chosen in class, nursery rhymes, classical pieces as well as short improvised passages but nothing really kept his interest and soon enough I would be pushed off the stool. This went on for weeks and I began to think that music would also be an area where Josh would not progress.

Then one day as I was letting him glissando up and down and lean over me to play the low notes, he played 'D' twice by accident. I played D back. Josh waited. I very slowly and gently began a flowing chord progression based around D major. He was immediately focussed looked at me and vocalised. He nodded his head in time with the arpeggio patterns and seemed mesmerised. I continued, playing expressively, not too loud, through D, F#, G, A chords and back to D. This lasted for 15 minutes and when I stopped he picked up my hands and put them back on the piano. It was a moment of triumph!

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- You may have a lot of pupils like Josh, how can you keep track of what they do?
- Do you use the “sounds of intent” ([soundsofintent.org](http://soundsofintent.org)) framework? If not, you might find exploring it informative.

### MAINSTREAM

- How can you try and allow for enough time to work with children like Josh? Does Josh have a TA you could work with? How can you find time to talk to them in your busy schedule? How can the SEND department help you?

### WCET

- Who could you speak to, to find out about Josh’s interests? How can you use these interest in the lesson to help him engage with you?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- How much time do you need to allow for, to develop a trusting and safe for learning and communication?

## VIGNETTE 6

### CONTEXT: SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL

At first I didn't know what to expect as sometimes working with secondary school children without additional needs can be challenging enough so being in a school with children that have mental health difficulties, Autism, ADHD, Anxiety, OCD and many more conditions was initially daunting. I learnt very quickly that your whole teaching approach needs to be different within a special needs school. Establishing a routine each week is a priority for most students and making them aware of any changes to their lessons in advance. For example any known absences or changes of days should be told to the students to give them warning as that can increase anxiety due to change of their regular routine for that day and week. Involving them within the lesson and getting to know what kind of music they like so they are enjoying what they are singing helps a lot and I let them choose from a big book of pop songs so they feel they have some control over what they are singing. I do not push my students too much, not until I feel they are ready. I want them to feel completely comfortable with me and their voices. If they don't want to stand I don't force them and if they want to stop singing at any point they can.

Sometimes they may not want to come into lesson and you may need to go and gently encourage them. Sometimes you may get no eye contact during the lesson and little communication and must find ways to help them get the best experience. There are other occasions when a student may be full of anxiety, in a very bad mood. You may need to try and calm them down and distract them from what has upset them that day/morning. I have to be prepared to think on my toes and be very empathetic towards each student.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- How feasible is singing in your context?
- How do you know which children and young people it is, and isn't appropriate for?

### MAINSTREAM

- Consider the point at which the learners are ready to expand their learning or understanding of music, for example, the exploration of a different type/style/genre that is not in their immediate interests.
- How can you best approach this?

### WCET

- What does being empathetic look like in your setting?
- How might you think about it with classes of children you only see for an hour a week?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Once you have established a relationship with a learner you will now better how to manage situations.
- Do you talk to class teachers about the children you will be teaching? How do other colleagues handle this?

## VIGNETTE 7

### CONTEXT: MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

I try to give learners their own 'role' in the class room. This is usually something that I think they will enjoy and that will engage them in the lessons, such as listening monitor, instrument monitor or, if it is possible, to make them the leader of an activity. If they are more of an introvert character, I usually partner them with someone they get along with or someone that can help demonstrate activities to them. I always use the Teaching Assistants to help with the children that need extra help. In the past I have had children get frustrated with trying to play the instrument as they are finding it tricky. I try to take the pupil out for about ten minutes 1:1 and help them create their first sounds so that they can prove to themselves that they can play the instrument like everybody else.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- What does 'responsibility' mean in your context? How might you think about being able to employ this?
- Can you? Are your learners able to do this?

### MAINSTREAM

- What roles and responsibilities do you offer learners in the lesson? If you have support in the lesson from a teaching assistant, what role do they play in the learning?
- How can you engage these members of staff in pedagogical choices?

### WCET

- Do you offer roles and responsibilities in the lesson?
- How do you manage it? Do you know how other colleagues do this? Can TAs help?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Is there one 'best' way to start children and young people on your instrument?
- Do all your colleagues in the same instrumental family do the same thing?

## THINK PIECE 2

### CONTEXT: MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOL

Having taught in the music classroom for about 10 years, I've come to realise that "good" assessment is key to an inclusive education. Some teachers I know believe that assessment only occurs at the end of a unit – something which may typically be called "the assessment lesson". What usually happens here is that students undergo the assessment, if they do well, great; but if they don't, not a lot can be done about it because it's time to move on to the next unit of work. For me, this is a poor example of inclusive assessment as it is something which is done *to* the students (possibly because there is a prioritising of getting data into the spreadsheet) and not *with* them. What's even more worrying is that I have witnessed a number of good, hardworking students with additional needs who do not "perform" on the day, score badly and, as a result of their low performance, lose interest in the subject all together because they feel they're "not good enough". In my view, "good" assessment permeates through every lesson and between lessons. This type of assessment, commonly referred to as *formative assessment*, might take place in the form of a dialogue between the teacher and the pupil, or between pupils, to help move *everyone's* learning forward. These conversations are important because it makes it clear to those involved in the discussion as to where the learner is, where they need to be, and how they can get there.

I've been particularly inspired by the work of Martin Fautley and Alison Daubney. In their *Framework for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment in Key Stage 3 Music* (written for the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) in 2015<sup>1</sup>) they show a radar chart which illustrates individual student progress between two units of work. From this I experimented using two versions; the first for use during normal ongoing lessons (what I called the "process" of learning) which then led to the final assessment on a second chart (what I called the "product" of learning). The "process" chart allowed me to assess and track against the predetermined criteria where that learner was at that particular moment in time and what feedback I needed to give to move their learning forward. The comparison between the two can be really interesting. Since using these charts I have often found that students, especially those with an additional need, tend to do better during the lessons than on the final assessment. Regardless of what goes into the spreadsheet, what's *more* important, though, is that the student has shown and can see for themselves that they have made progress (regardless of whatever their starting point was), and *can* indeed demonstrate that particular knowledge, understanding or skill. What happens next, then, is that this becomes an individual learning target for the next unit of work as it is something which needs more practise. For me, this is the whole point of inclusive assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Available free of charge from <https://www.ism.org/nationalcurriculumMFAD>

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- We mentioned the “Sounds of Intent” framework above, have you used that?

### MAINSTREAM

- Do learners understand the learning processes involved in reaching the outcome? Can you emphasise process more, instead of product? How often do you assess your learners?

### WCET

- S4E in Birmingham has been working for a while on a WCET assessment framework. Do you use it? If not in Birmingham, does your music hub do something similar?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Are there ways you can assess to provide meaningful information for schools, children, and parents, about instrumental music progress?



## VIGNETTE 8

### CONTEXT: MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOL

I have had the privilege of working with a number of pupils who have cerebral palsy. One particular student had very little use of her left hand but was extremely keen to learn to play the drum kit, but could only hold one stick. We worked over a course of lessons to develop something that could allow use of both hands. The occupational therapy team were thrilled as apparently we had found a way to deliver physiotherapy without this particular student realising they were doing it. It also allowed this student to be part of a band.

In another school I had a dreadful experience, when I took over a GCSE class. There was a pupil with ASD in this group. My usual method of calling a class to attention is to clap a rhythm and for them to clap it back. Without realising, this was one sound that the pupil particularly could not cope with. It took myself and the ASD lead a few weeks to 'join the dots'. After this, not only did I adapt my behaviour management in this class (and others since), I had to think of alternative sounds that were more bearable for this student. This has also made me adopt a policy of warning pupils if the lesson is going to be louder than usual and discussing with them the planning. For example when activities have short bursts of loud activities I will discuss this with them and if they wish not to take part provide quite spaces and opportunities, for example they may wish to stand outside but more than often pupils choose not to take option as we resolve and work through challenges in the lesson.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- What ways have you found to gain attention when you are working with groups of children and young people?
- Do you do different things, at different times, with different classes?

### MAINSTREAM

- The teacher in this vignette did something 'normal'; have you ever had the experience where this was totally inappropriate for some children and young people in your classes?
- Have you thought about what you do? Have you tried other ways?

### WCET

- How do you get the children's attention in a busy class? Are there silent/visual ways you can do this, or do they all involve sound?
- What ways do classroom generalist teachers employ? Have you talked to them about this?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- Are there things which it may be inappropriate aurally to do with children and young people in your lessons?
- Is this known by the school? If you do find something like this out, do you know who to tell in the school?

## VIGNETTE 9

### CONTEXT: MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOL

This vignette considers a class of 28 mixed ability year 11 learners in a state comprehensive secondary school. The young people were all engaged with GCSE Music and were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. The group consisted of class members who specialised in instruments traditionally considered appropriate for: Indian classical music, rock music, classical music and other contrasting styles, genres and traditions. The class included Pupil Premium learners from a range of ethnic origins. Complex needs within the group included: learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; physical disabilities; and mental health.

A high quality inclusive and engaging curriculum is an entitlement for all learners. This is facilitated through an affirmative teacher response, which places value on the musical contributions of the young people in the class. I regard an inclusive participatory practice as a consistent dynamic in all music curriculum activity. For me, the origins of inclusive practice begins with its inception at curriculum design. It is at this point in which it is structured to facilitate inclusive pathways to participation.

This is embodied in classroom activities that do not require a single musical interpretation or access point for success. Therefore all learner-led contributions enabled further musical development as learners listened, reflected and enriched each other's practice. Such an approach required acceptance of all contributions, irrespective of their duration, musical arrangement or stylistic features. It also required *stretch and challenge* for all, in that feedback from me and their peers need to be appropriately focused and structured to enable further development, requiring engagement in preference to passivity.

Within the classroom I try to encourage musical exchanges that are substantively dialogic. In leading the learning, I am aware of the importance of listening and seek to understand musical outcomes in the context of learner intentions, before offering feedback. This strengthens our relation and enables a supportive learning environment in which learners feel valued and able to share their vulnerabilities in developing composition material.

To plan for this, teaching and learning is sub-divided into learning episodes to enable access and participation by all learners. This cycle of musical planning by the young people, music-making to develop their ideas, and the sharing of outcomes as a class, enabled all to participate and contribute. This approach also facilitated inclusive differentiation during the lesson.

This inclusive pedagogy that enables musical learning for all, and is enacted in a number of different modes. Structuring of musical activities with a concentration on access through differing entry points, facilitated those with physical disabilities in participatory parity. Enabling an interchange of musical dialogue between the learner and I enabled a supportive and tailored musical learning subset for those suffering with their mental health. The use of learning episodes supported learners for whom prolonged concentration and uniformity of learning dynamic was a barrier to their learning. I hoped that these approaches met the needs of all the learners, and were perceived as moments of *engagement*, rather than hindrances creating *barriers* to musical development.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### SPECIAL SCHOOL

- In this vignette the teacher talks of *engagement* with music, how do you perceive that in your context?

### MAINSTREAM

- What do 'learning episodes' look like in your context? How long do they last? Do you know about barriers to learning that some children and young people in your classes may have?

### WCET

- How much information about children and young people do you have before you start a WCET class? What would you/the school/the music hub do if there were children who would not be able to fully access the instrumental learning?

### 1 TO 1 TUITION

- What range of adaptations are there for the instrumental family you teach?
- Is undifferentiated virtuosity possible for all children on your instrument? If now, how might you go about addressing this?

## KEY LEARNING AND CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of identifiable aspects of inclusive practice from the vignettes. The teachers' insights give us lots of aspects to consider when planning for, and reflecting on teaching and learning in diverse educational spaces and contexts. Here is a summary of the pedagogical approaches used by the teachers:

- The teachers designed meaningful learning experiences that encouraged learners' intrinsic motivation.
- The teachers offered tailored support that took into account individual needs and interests.
- Learner agency was important in lessons.
- The teachers were consistent in their classroom management approaches.
- The teachers recognise the importance of ensemble music making and the impact of social processes on learning.
- Being responsive was important. Although the teacher may have planned lessons, being responsive to learner needs was at the centre of their professional practice.
- Meaningful music-making placed the learners at the heart of lessons. This often led to strong learning relationships, with a commitment to meeting individual students' musical needs.
- Reflecting *in* and *on* practice are important processes for critiquing practice and pedagogy.
- A multi-agency approach can be critical to working in an inclusive manner. This involves speaking to other members of staff, and others working with young people to find out more information regarding approaches and barriers to learning.
- The celebration of the pupils' work is an important part of the learning process, and engenders a sense of inclusion.
- Musical respect was an important aspect of the professional and personal relationship between the teacher and learner. This was arrived at over time and often required patience.
- Flexible grouping, not fixed ability, is key to working well together. Nearly all music classes tend to be mixed ability anyway.
- Collaborative approaches are a good way to work. If you are new to a context, don't be afraid to seek out help and advice. It's better than struggling alone.
- Metacognitive approaches – self assessment, pupil target setting, shared learning objectives all help development
- Positive relations with pupil and teacher are easy to say, but not always easy to achieve. Some professional relationships need work. Don't be too concerned when things don't go well, this will always be the case for teachers at different times.
- Higher order thinking through questioning takes time to develop. Think about question 'stems' you can use.
- One of the key points in the pedagogy described by music teachers in the vignettes was that in order for the session to be meaningful, the learner needed a visible goal. Maybe this could be expressed in pupil-friendly ways, as well as pedagogically appropriate ones?

- Formative assessment is important as a way to develop dialogue between teacher and learner, or learner to learner. These formative assessment practices helped move learning forward.
- Focussing on the processes involved in music making rather than a final product as a mode of assessment. This allowed all learners to observe learning taking place, rather than being solely driven towards the end-game of a final product.
- Talk to and engage with as many colleague as possible about your learners preferences.
- Plan with learners. If possible can you engage them in the planning process, perhaps they could come up with creative ways of engaging in music that are more inclusive and respect different modes of learning? Have you asked them what they like? What have you done with this information if you have?
- Offer alternative spaces for music making, so that if learners need 'time out' or space away from loud noises they have somewhere to go to.
- Consider what inclusive practice looks like from the outset of curriculum design. Offer different entry points for learners.
- Dialogic musical exchanges are important, but time must be given to listen to, and respond to learner intentions.

## BUT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE, FOR YOU, WITH YOUR LEARNERS?

To help you consider what an inclusive classroom or educational environment might look like for you and your learners, we have created a series of thinking points. We are not suggesting that all of these will feature in one lesson, but that in reading this you may reflect on them to plan for learning, use them as critical friends when you are unsure of the best approach for you learners, for use in group meetings or use them to help guide curriculum planning sessions. We do not see this list as a completed guide, but merely somewhere to start when considering inclusive musical practice. We hope that you will continue to add to this list with colleagues and learners.

1. Longer lessons. For those delivering instrumental lessons 30 minutes may be the minimum. Be aware that response time may be slower, leaving gaps or space is essential. More time will also allow you to break the lesson into (more) shorter activities, for those who need this approach.
2. Give time and space to your pupils with SEND. Particularly those with more profound needs. Wait, wait and wait again.
3. Know your students. Collect as much info about your pupils BEFORE lessons start and also get to know their likes or dislikes, any sensory issues and/or particular motivations.
4. Motivations in particular can come in really handy with those who display challenging behaviour. Liaise with teachers, Sencos, parents, carers, to build up a picture of the learner, and discuss appropriate aims.
5. Instruments. Think about the instruments; can the students access them? Is there a physical barrier to music making? How can this be removed? Could an adapted/electronic version be created/found?
  - a. Is a shiny brass instrument too visually stimulating?
  - b. Do they like the sound it makes?
  - c. Type of instrument based around those with additional needs should be part of the conversation in Whole Class Ensemble Teaching?
  - d. Don't be afraid of using less conventional instruments or ideas to engage and remove barriers. iPads/ sound beam are a couple of examples!
6. Persevere. If your student(s) are not engaged or accessing the lessons immediately don't be deterred - again time is important and some students will need extra time to get to know you, the instrument, and the class/context. Consistency and routine over time will be particularly important to enable these learners.
7. Don't be afraid to ask for help or support. If you are in a teaching situation where you feel you are out of your depth, or like you no longer have control, or some children are just not learning or accessing your lesson, for any reason, don't be afraid to ask for help. Senior management and/or SEND adviser/Senco are there for that reason. It is preferable to speak out and ask for help, rather than to wait. To do so could be detrimental to you and your learners. Sometimes classes are too large or the students in them are not able to concentrate, follow instructions or effectively work together. No matter how much experience a teacher has, some teaching environments just will not work. Always ask.

8. Be clear. Some children and young people with additional needs need very simple, clear instructions. Make sure that you do not over complicate instructions. Being literal can also be useful. Think about colloquial speech, “It’s raining cats and dogs”, “is it, I can’t see any, where are they?” Speak in a way that is clear to all of the students in your class. Also, don’t talk too much when the children could be playing their instruments. Ofsted talked of music being the ‘target language’; is it in your lessons?
9. Ensure the experience is meaningful to your students, particularly when working with those with sensory impairments or more severe difficulties. Think about whether reading music is necessary or beneficial to your students. Is this just an added layer of complexity for them that actually hinders their progress?
10. Don’t be afraid to be creative and imaginative, and veer away from potentially what you had planned and/or the way you were taught. Use whatever works for them to shape your lessons.
11. This child-centred approach can allow the students’ abilities and motivations to shape the provision. This is particularly valuable when working with those with more profound needs. Give them control. Sometimes this will be the only time in their lives when they will have this opportunity. For those with challenging behaviours encourage them to make the rules and then they will be less likely to break them. Let them lead and help them to feel they have some power/control in a positive way. Include them in the process.
12. Make children feel safe and valued. Make sure that they understand what they are being asked and that they feel they have a choice. If they don’t want to participate straight away, that’s ok. It’s also ok to get things wrong.
13. Keep those with particularly challenging behaviours physically close to you in lessons.
14. For those with ADHD, or particularly lively groups, split the class into smaller groups for activities and keep the pace up. Lots of small snappy activities working with others in different ways can be beneficial, but be aware of when to slow down too.
15. Use and involve other adults in lessons, give them clear instructions to help support. It is beneficial to make time to discuss sessions, progress, and behaviour before and after sessions with staff.
16. Praise. Use praise effectively. Sometimes challenging students should be praised for not doing something negative. Praise can come in different forms different for different pupils. Some teachers say “catch them being good”!
17. Differentiate. Do activities that can span many different ability levels that offer learners different roles and include different members of the class. Remember that in order to be truly inclusive we must recognise, acknowledge and address differences in ability, need and motivation.
18. What do we mean by ‘inclusive’? Is a disabled child being give a shaker in a WCET violin class inclusive? What can be done in this situation?
19. Repertoire. Try not to be bound by traditional repertoire. To truly include pupil voice repertoire, this might be very different in different schools, and with different pupils and classes. For many reading traditional staff notation may not be the preferred or most appropriate medium, as it can often bring added or unnecessary complexities to the learning process. This is all dependent upon individual pupil(s). This doesn’t mean you can’t use traditional pieces, or notation, but do experiment to find the best fit.



20. Be open minded, try not to go in with preconceived ideas of what you think will happen regarding behaviour, and also of ability or progress. It's important to know as much as possible going in but try not to let it colour your expectations.
21. Don't think because something worked for you as a youngster it will automatically work for everyone.
22. Breaks. Be mindful of physical and emotional limits and don't be afraid of giving breaks if appropriate.
23. Performances. Give learners performance opportunities where appropriate. Be sure the learners want to do this, are prepared enough and that the outcome will be positive for them. If you find there are no opportunities for particular learners, question this. Is this something that could be developed in school, with the music service/hub. *All* children and young people have a right to a music education, to celebrate this and to perform, this includes those with SEND.
24. Be flexible. Don't be afraid to stray away from your lesson plan. Improvise, be patient and persevere
25. Assessment. Find the most appropriate assessment tool for your context this could be ABRSM, Trinity Examinations, the National Curriculum, Sounds of Intent, to name but a few!
26. **\*The most important point\*** is that there are no golden rules. All learners are different. Arguably, particularly in the realm of additional needs and disability, you will encounter many different abilities, as well as barriers to music making; physical and otherwise, in special and mainstream settings. You will need to consider and reflect upon these when teaching those with additional needs. Also when taking advice or guidance, like reading this booklet! Don't forget, if you have met one child with an additional need, you have met one child with an additional need. Always assess on a case by case, pupil by pupil basis. Every child is different, after all!

## CAN YOU THINK OF SOME OF YOUR OWN?

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## FURTHER READING

HERE ARE SOME OTHER PLACES WE RECOMMEND FOR LITERATURE ON INCLUSIVE PRACTICE:

- OHMI <https://www.ohmi.org.uk/>
- Sounds of Intent website and Post Graduate Certificate <http://soundsofintent.org/>
- Margaret Corke <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Margaret-Corke/e/B00580RDIE>
- Drake Music <http://www.drakemusic.org/>
- Sarah Mawby <http://music.leeds.ac.uk/people/sarah-mawby-2>
- Figure notes <https://www.figurenotes.org/>
- YAMSEN <http://www.yamsen.org.uk/>
- NASEN <http://www.nasen.org.uk/>
- Jessie's fund <https://www.jessiesfund.org.uk/>
- Live music Now <http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/>
- Inner sense <http://innersense.org.uk/innersense.org.uk/InnerSense.html>
- Phil Mullen <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/phil-mullen-5a83ba2b>
- OpenUp Music <http://openupmusic.org/>
- Soundabout <https://www.soundabout.org.uk/>
- PMLD Link <http://www.pmldlink.org.uk/>
- Flo Longhorn <http://flopuplications.com/index.php>
- Joanna Grace <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/>
- Sophie Gray S4EMusic Service and SEND pages of the website <https://servicesforeducation.co.uk/index.php/Music-Services/music-services.html>
- Youth Music Quality Framework - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/do-review-improve-quality-framework-music-education>

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**Services for Education  
Unit 3 Holt Court  
Holt Street  
Birmingham Science Park Aston  
Birmingham  
B7 4AX**

**Birmingham City University  
Faculty of Health, Education, and Life Sciences  
City South Campus  
Westbourne Road  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 3TN**