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### Music Best Practice Grid

#### What should we see in *Music* lessons as best practice?

- Retrieval or warm up activity. This can include various activities including **mini whiteboards and retrieval of keywords** and technical language (followed by discussion or questioning), a whole class practical musical activity, Think, Pair share activities discussing group work and band skills, self-assessment from previous performances or taking part in an active musical style register.
- Explicit modelling during whole class learning and on a 1-2-1 basis with those students that need extra support. Modelling and examples of good practice also comes from the students during performance activities and during questioning and discussion.
- Explicit explanation and demonstration of use of equipment, how to organise rehearsal space and practice time with students able to vocalise aims of the current task and the project (via verbal questioning and Q&A on the board). This is measured as a whole class, with students being reminded of expectations, of what they have been struggling with previously, and where their rehearsals need to progress. There is weekly retrieval of this so that students understand how to improve.
- Clear aims (through WHAT/WHY/HOW structure) for what students are trying to achieve and how it links back to previous learning and concepts. Progression of ALL/MOST/SOME/A FEW success criteria that is shared at the beginning and end of lessons (part of plenary). This can be through explicit levels related to the unit of work and/or through stand-alone success criteria, particularly for introductory work.
- Whole class learning before practical breakout or the setting up of Computer & Electronic keyboard equipment for any main activities. Teacher recap and repeat modelling of set up, expectations and group/personal targets for the lesson. Explicit reading of resource sheet (usually practical playing sheet or composing worksheet) and Q&A to cement understanding via cold calling.
- Extension progression embedded in task and differentiated `stretch` adding complexity /sophistication. Extension resources to be made available as well as through verbal dialogue and modelling.

#### What does effective questioning and scaffolding look like in *Music*?

- Cold calling
- Constant reference to MADTSHIRT Mnemonic which focuses on the musical elements and how they link to music and specific musical styles and genres.
- Pitching questions to the learner especially lower ability so they *can* answer/show correctly.
- Questions that build confidence by selecting students who will be able to give the answer, and asking students that are struggling to repeat the answers of more confident students.
- Pitching questions for higher ability asking for expanded detailed, full sentences and more sophisticated answers with contextual reference etc.
- Model an answer if they get stuck.
- Extension questions that that probe for, and explore, deeper meaning. An example would be when discussing beat and pulse exploring how that then applies to tempo, and how this would then impact an ensemble performance.
- Link questioning back to the lesson aims the success criteria.
- Multiple suggestions around variety, e.g. "what else could you do to add more texture to your piece?" to encourage creativity. There are no wrong answers. Positive feedback even if astray "Mmm, I like your thinking, but..."
- Any misconceptions dealt with in the lesson, even if this takes extra time.
- Performances/composition development opportunities through using student work to scaffold improvements and elicit effective peer assessment/feedback. Asking students to evaluate using positive language and effective critique with x1 each of a positive comment and x1 area to develop.
- Where appropriate to the topic, scaffolding exercises on **mini whiteboards or on worksheets ranging from 'fill the gaps sentences'** and **more open-ended questions**, to **reading song lyrics on a white board and stopping at appropriate places in the song, with the teacher manipulating which words are used and stopped at to take account of the ability of the student.**

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visualiser for modelling piano technique (note naming, finger positioning and coordination). Students are shown to compose in real time using <i>Musescore</i> and <i>Bandlab</i> software on whiteboard. Scaffolding in step-wise chunks. <i>I do, We do, You do</i> – there are explicit activities that show this.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocal activities – <b>where students do not feel confident in singing</b>, scaffold levels. For example, students sing, students say the words in rhythm, students mouth the words or students clap the rhythm or pulse to the timing of the music/song.</li></ul>
<p><b>What does great modelling and exposition look like in Music?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Links directly to the retrieval or entrance activity students are going to do.</li><li>• Detailed very small steps and scaffolded progression in chunks. <i>I do, We do, You do</i>.</li><li>• Opportunities for students to showcase work together with the teacher – modelling together. Use a ‘pilot participant’ in front of class to demonstrate to class that the task/steps of practice are achievable.</li><li>• Gives possibilities for the creative process – showing students other things through modelling – “Have you considered ...” to make parts more complex, sophisticated (without cognitive overload).</li><li>• Detailed modelling of playing techniques including instrument hold, posture, coordination methods, body alignment etc which shows students how to start. Explicit step-wise modelling of how to set up equipment and technical skills. Model with a demonstrator student in front of class = what do we do next?</li><li>• Spark enthusiasm by showing potential for a piece through modelled performance. <i>Students feel this product is achievable</i>.</li><li>• Using ‘think out loud’ while modelling to give students an understanding of what the teacher is thinking, not just what they are doing when performing or composing.</li></ul>	<p><b>What does retrieval practice look like in Music?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low stakes testing (pop quizzes) both in lesson and set as homework on which recalls theory from previous lessons, previous units and previous years.</li><li>• <b>Whiteboard questions and understanding of keywords from previous lesson.</b></li><li>• Questioning using appropriate techniques to elicit expected knowledge, or targeted questioning for differentiated questioning.</li><li>• Use of Cold Calling Qs.</li><li>• Homework quizzes (self-marking) based on MADTSHIRT or the musical context of different genres of music.</li><li>• <b>Display boards with commonly and frequently used terminology which are often referred to in the lesson and where a student may be asked to read.</b></li></ul>
<p><b>What will you see in pupils’ workbooks? [N/A]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Students use whiteboards to take memo` notes and for quick quizzes.</b></li><li>• <b>Group worksheets/resources used as an aid to practical work and to remember modifications.</b></li><li>• <b>Reflection sheets where targets/levels can be recorded.</b></li></ul> <p>Key stage 3 only.</p>	<p><b>What formative assessment and feedback will you see in Music?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Constant</b> personal and group feedback during practical sessions where students are being given the necessary instructions to improve their performances – for example, ‘introduce your instruments one a time during the introduction and then you will all be able to feel the pulse before the vocal entry’.</li><li>• <b>Whole class formative feedback of rehearsals, mock-performances and assessment performances (often displayed on the presentation).</b></li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End of lesson feedback to class, highlighting what strengths have been throughout the rehearsal processes and where groups can develop in the future – this is also delivered before rehearsals sessions the following week.</li><li>• EBIs at start and ends of lesson in conjunction with the verbal/whole class feedback.</li><li>• Peer assessment of each- others work, for example asking them to comment on how effective the timing was on the vocal cue at the start of the song (can be done as group verbal task and/or written down on whiteboards to report back to the class).</li><li>• Written teacher notes/records when groups rehearse in rooms - this is personalised to each group and student so that extra targets can be added each week. Also acts as an 'aide memoir' for students who are not regular attenders.</li></ul>
<p><b>What questions are useful to ask the children about their learning to elicit understanding?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions about practical performance which relate to music theory, for example questioning how metre, beat, and tempo are applied to a performance 'How many beats are in a bar?; 'How many bars are you playing the 'A` Chord for?; 'How do you work out a chord triad'? This is followed by practice techniques: BITESIZE-SLOW -REPEAT. For example, 'slow down to check accuracy, repeat to learn accurately, then speed up as coordination improves'.</li><li>• Questions about instruments and their function, such as how a drum's purpose is to provide the beat, the keyboards provide an accompaniment using chords, and vocals provide a melody. Where the instrument lies in the bigger picture of music-making, e.g. Orchestral, World Music Scene, Jazz Band etc.</li><li>• Reflect on your performance and verbalise your EBIs using appropriate music keywords.</li></ul>	<p><b>How do teachers in <i>Music</i> engage with the subject community?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social media forums (primarily KS3 forum and KS4 forums).</li><li>• Leicestershire Music Service.</li><li>• TMET Colleagues – SIF.</li><li>• Collaboration with other schools.</li><li>• Visiting Music Teachers (including peripatetic staff).</li><li>• Teachers' own performing engagements.</li><li>• Visiting performers/workshops.</li><li>• Subject knowledge- concerts, performances, etc.</li><li>• Subscription to MDR and questioning platform.</li></ul> <p><b>Literacy &amp; Oracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continual focus on attempting to use/incorporate the 'elements of music' keywords (MADTSHIRT) into music conversation peer to peer. This is in addition to any relevant use of musical terms directly related to the genre being studied.</li><li>• Using full sentences using MADTSHIRT words with explanations.</li><li>• Discovering linguistic ways to discuss <b>subjective</b> sophisticated and artistic thought and feelings using expressive, emotional and impressionistic descriptions.</li><li>• Using links to literacy in terms of keyword terminology, for example the use of 'palindrome' in musical notation and the</li></ul>

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	origins of words such as 'ostinato' deriving from the word 'obstinate'. Key stage 3 only.
<p><b>What does meeting the needs of SEND, NTE, emerging readers and PP look like?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities for students to have 'reduced rate' instrumental lessons with the school peripatetic instrumental team – families contribute £7.50 towards each lesson (PP) and fully subsidised lessons for some SEN students and LAC students.</li><li>• Extra-curricular activities including Choir, Jazz group, Drum Club, RMA's own emerging school 'rock band' (early stages) and more clubs planned for 2026. Students feel safe, trusted and valued in the department.</li><li>• Immediate access to equipment including 1-1 usage, particularly for those students where the building of confidence is a priority. This is also the case for those taking instrumental lessons.</li><li>• <b>Use of mini whiteboards for NTE/SEND students with 1-1 explicit modelling and careful scaffolding – I do, You do. Breaks down key language and puts it into practice through demonstration.</b></li><li>• Manageable chunks of practical performance content – gathering around the piano with NTE/SEN/PP students already in a seating plan that enables them to gather within close proximity of the teacher and benefit from the visual that is taking place. Often more purposeful than using just a visualiser.</li><li>• Provision of visual cues – where students may prefer to comment and discuss – NTE/SEN students may choose to use mini whiteboards or demonstrate the answer practically through use of instrument or body percussion.</li><li>• Paired and small group work to strategically promote peer learning and collaborative working that isn't primarily based around conversation (practical 'show me' and 'I'll show you tasks').</li><li>• Small group modelling or 1-1 mini sessions when other students are in practice rooms to enable further embedding. Often gathered around the main piano or chosen instrument. HA students are also used to promote confidence and model.</li><li>• Mini whole class pitstops – where practical performance takes place. Students can hear and listen and engage with feedback through practical demonstration and improvements.</li></ul>	