Responding to pupil’s needs when teaching music

***The importance of music to pupils with leaning difficulties***

Music is a powerful, unique form of communication that can change the way pupils feel, think and act. It brings together intellect and feeling and enables personal expression, reflection and emotional development. As an integral part of culture, past and present, it helps pupils understand themselves and relate to others, forgoing important links between home, school and the wider world.

In particular, music offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

* Experience a sense of pride and achievement in their own work
* Demonstrate their ability in an area not dependant on language skills
* Improve listening, concentration and attention skills
* Develop imitation skills
* Produce sounds and develop expressive language
* Practise turn-taking
* Choose, discriminate and justify decisions
* Experiment and try new ideas where there are no right or wrong answers
* Develop coordination and functional fine motor skills
* Support the development of movement and mobility
* Encourage cooperation, tolerance and a willingness to work with others
* Develop self- discipline and self-confidence
* Foster community involvement
* Be involved in activities that may provide a fulfilling hobby or pastime and promote lifelong learning

***Listening and applying knowledge and understanding***

At an early stage, this aspect begins with the development of an awareness of, and an ability to attend to, voices, sounds and different types of music. Through all musical activities, teaching this aspect across key stages helps pupils to:

* Listen and develop aural memory, through listening, imitation and turn-taking activities, *for example, tracking sound, responding to one’s own name in a song, imitating body percussion sounds, matching sounds made behind a screen, responding to a key word in a song, passing a clap or rhythm round a circle, playing instruments in turn*
* Be aware of the different musical elements , and how these can be organised into musical structures, *for example, through exploring instruments with different pitches, listening to music with contrasting tempos, stilling to silence in music-making activities, tapping out the rhythm of a name or word on a tambour, playing percussion at different tempos following a conductor, making a variety of sounds using body percussion, experiencing live music performance with solo and group artists*
* Understand how sounds can be made, produced and described in different ways, *for example, by making sounds and music in a variety of ways using voice, body and a range of objects, instruments and ICT, linking sounds to object pictures or symbols or signs, using graphic scores and conventional notation.*
* Understand how music is used for particular purposes, by linking specific sounds, songs and music to particular activities, experiences and moods, *for example, the sound of the dinner trolley, ‘good morning’ song, quiet music played at the end of the day music for dancing or relaxing, special music for religious festivals and celebrations, music for worship;* by listening to music previously heard live***,*** *for example, classical or rock concerts;* and by producing music individually or as a result of group or class work.

***Controlling sounds through singing and playing- performing skills***

For all pupils, controlling sounds through singing and playing –performing skills- begins with exploring, controlling and interacting with sound, and developing an awareness of self and others. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

* Participate in songs, possibly through the use of ICT, *for example, pressing a switch to play a pre-recorded contribution at an appropriate point in the song*; vocalising; signing actions; humming a phrase of a melody or using and end word or phrase in a chant, rhyme or song; developing vocal techniques and musical expression
* Play tuned and untuned instruments, possibly through exploring and interacting with sound making or vibrating objects, *for example, exploring sound makers, reaching for instruments, moving the body to operate a sound beam or a musical mobile*; playing a variety of instruments using a range of techniques to produce different sound qualities and working to increase awareness of self and others in musical activities, *for example, listening and attending to music, responding to their own name in a son;* anticipating turns; taking turns; working collaboratively with others with an increasing awareness of their role within the group and their audience, *for example, starting and stopping at a given sign, participating in a simple percussion performance*

***Creating and developing musical ideas- composing skills***

Creating and developing music ideas- composing skills-begins with pupils attending, experimenting, exploring and choosing between sounds. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

* Create sounds spontaneously through; close attention to adults’ imitation of pupils’ own sounds, for example, vocal, body percussion or use of instruments; being aware that their movements create sounds; experimenting with sounds and sound makers, including the use of ICT,  *for example, computer programs and sound beams;* creating a body percussion sequence, *for example, clap-stamp-clap;* improvising; exploring a range of musical elements in a Variety of ways, *for example, vocally, using body percussion and instrumentally, using ICT.*
* Explore, choose and organise sounds and musical ideas through developing an awareness of how sounds can be made by listening, observing and exploring; developing an understanding of cause and effect and how sounds can be changed and ordered; demonstrating a preference for particular sounds; making choices; using ICT to create, record, change, combine and refine sounds; playing percussion instruments in a group of instruments at a time; using graphic scores to sequence music; playing, comparing and contrasting different arrangements; creating a sound picture using instruments or everyday objects; combining aspects of the same and different musical elements to make a simple musical structure, *for example, dynamics (loud, quiet, loud)and pitch and duration (high and fast, low and slow, high and fast)* selecting and combining resources within a given musical structure, genre, style or tradition.

***Responding and reviewing – appraising skills***

Developing appraising skills begins with pupils attending to, and moving in response to, music, developing and awareness of the similarities and differences in sounds, and the feelings, experiences and mood music evokes. Teaching this aspect across all key stages can help pupils to:

* Explore and express their ideas and feelings about the music, *for example, through facial responses, body movements, signs, selecting pictures or symbols, painting to music, dance, expressive language* and use a musical vocabulary; develop preferences for particular styles of music; develop an awareness of the similarities and differences between different pieces of music and the feelings and moods they create; respond to music linked to art, pictures, photographs, poems and extracts from books; compare and contrast music by different composers on particular themes, *for example, space, sea, war;* compare and contrast different music by the same composer
* Make improvements to their own and others’ work by developing an awareness of the similarities and differences between sounds; by identifying and comparing sounds; by listening to and recognising recordings of their own and others’ work; by making changes to their work, for example, by choosing to accompany a song with a different instrument, altering the sequence of picture cue cards to change a simple composition; and by making and justifying choices about instruments, sounds and music.