

SEND Resource Pack

Welcome to this SEND Music Resource Pack from Yorkshire Youth & Music

This pack is for music coordinators, teachers, community musicians, classroom assistants and support staff – anyone who has a responsibility for, or an interest in, delivering music in Special Education Needs & Disability settings. Not everything in this pack will be applicable to everyone, or in every situation, but we hope that you'll find something inspiring and useful.

The aim of the pack is to give you guidance and ideas to ensure that the music-making you facilitate in your settings is creative, accessible, inclusive and fun! We'll be encouraging you to listen to, explore, play and create all different types of music by using the instruments and resources you already have – as well as giving you some tips about things you might consider purchasing. We'll also be exploring some of the ways in which music technology can broaden musical horizons and create ever more accessible ways to make music.

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Section 1 - Introduction and Principles

1a. Why we should...

Let's take a moment to think about the value of music – particularly as it relates to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Whether by experience, training, observation or simple instinct, many of us would recognise that music is a “good thing.” You may be able to think of instances in your own work where you've seen children respond to music in ways that you wouldn't expect with other forms of intervention. This is probably for a number of reasons, some of which are below.

Music is 'hardwired' into us

It would appear that music is a fundamental part of what it means to be human. Research tells us that an awareness of sound is one of the first things to form in the womb (where we become conscious of our mother's heartbeat). At the other end of life's spectrum, an appreciation of music is one of the last faculties to leave us. Many will have seen video clips of elderly people with quite advanced dementia become lively and animated on listening to the music of their youth. Our response to sound and music is, without doubt, an important biological, psychological and emotional part of who we are. For this reason, it is often the case that, for example, a child whose development in speech and language gives cause for concern may very well have an already highly developed and sophisticated understanding of sound and music. Put simply, music has the power to reach even when other avenues of communication appear to be shut off. The great story teller, Hans Christian Andersen, knew this when he said: “Where words fail, music speaks.”

Music can be enjoyed actively or passively

Music can be a profoundly engaging experience – whether you're the creator or the listener. This means that in a class or group situation not everybody has to be playing all the time. There is plenty of opportunity to gain a great deal from the music that others are making. The child who finds it demanding to maintain physical involvement in playing an instrument will benefit from simply being in the same space as his/her classmates, enjoying their performances. There is not an enormous distinction between 'taking part' and 'listening'; After all, attentive and focused listening is not passive, but an active skill in its own right.



All contributions are valid and valued

There is a classic Morecambe & Wise sketch which culminates (after a truly dreadful performance) in Eric telling an exasperated André Previn: “I’m playing all the right notes... but not necessarily in the right order!” However, there’s so much more to music than trying to get all the right notes in the right order. Sometimes music can be all about freedom, expression and improvisation – where there is no right or wrong. Then our role is not to criticise or correct but to simply listen and accept musical contributions. This can lead to greatly enhanced trust, acceptance and much deeper communication (this pack contains a few ideas about how facilitate such music making).

Music is non-verbal

OK, so songs have words but there’s a vast amount of music that can be explored without any spoken language. This makes it the perfect means of expression for children and young people who – for whatever reason – are non-verbal. Even when the voice is used, we don’t have to employ words. Humming, wordless or simple nonsense vocalisation are all fine. It was good enough for Sinatra: “Dooby dooby doo!”

Music encourages intentional movement and develops motor skills.

We have seen many children who, reluctant at first, simply can’t resist reaching out to hit a big drum or wave their hand in a Soundbeam – the lure of the musical reward can be very enticing!

The list goes on; setting staff have suggested other reasons to value music making:

- Music improves concentration and memory
- Music encourages and develops creativity
- Music builds self-confidence and self-esteem
- Music increase social interaction
- Music is good for teamwork and collaboration
- Music enables us to explore and express feelings
- Music improves and enhances mood
- Music develops social skills – like taking turns
- Music encourages listening and helps develop listening skills
- Music gives context and meaning to repetition
- Music can be a great vehicle for teaching other subjects e.g. a counting song to help with maths
- Music helps with relaxation and has healing properties



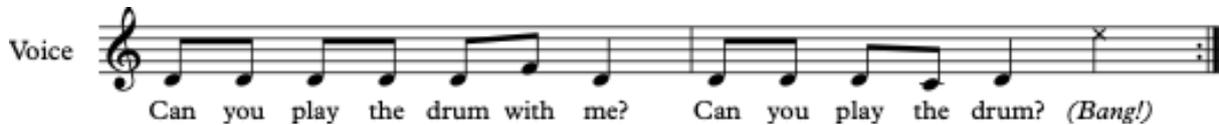
1b. Leading Musically

There are 3 principles for leading music, musically

Principle 1 – Say Less, Play More

The human voice is intrinsically interesting - it commands attention, which means that the spoken word can easily distract from music-making. We recommend leading through music; If you're inviting a participant to take part in drumming, demonstrate by playing the drum yourself and then passing the instrument to them, signaling that it is their turn. Simplify and reduce your use of language to a few carefully chosen instructions and words of encouragement - reinforced by Makaton signs if appropriate. You can devise some simple hand signals to guide the music-making; an open-handed invitation to start playing; a raised palm to stop; a flattened hand, with the palm moving downwards to get quieter and the obvious reverse!

Alternatively, turn the spoken word into singing! All you need is a bit of practice and just enough confidence to give it a go. If the idea of singing puts you off - just think of it as "chanting" or "rapping". It really doesn't have to be complicated - a few notes that easily sit in your natural vocal range will do. Using the example of playing a drum, you could try something like this: (Musical Example 1)



You could:

- discuss how best to avoid the distraction caused by the spoken word with all participating staff
- use an app like a voice memo recorder on your phone to record the lesson. Listen back afterwards and ask whether speech or staff voices dominate.

Principle 2 – Repertoire vs Improvisation

As with other arts and creative subjects, music is an opportunity for us to explore together as co-learners. But you can also allow space to improvise, to throw out the repertoire and simply make something up. Enjoy the simple act of playing with sounds together, perhaps on a theme – sounds at the seaside, going on a journey, or outdoors at night. Listen to each other. You can create unspoken dialogue, responding to a sound with another one, building up a picture.



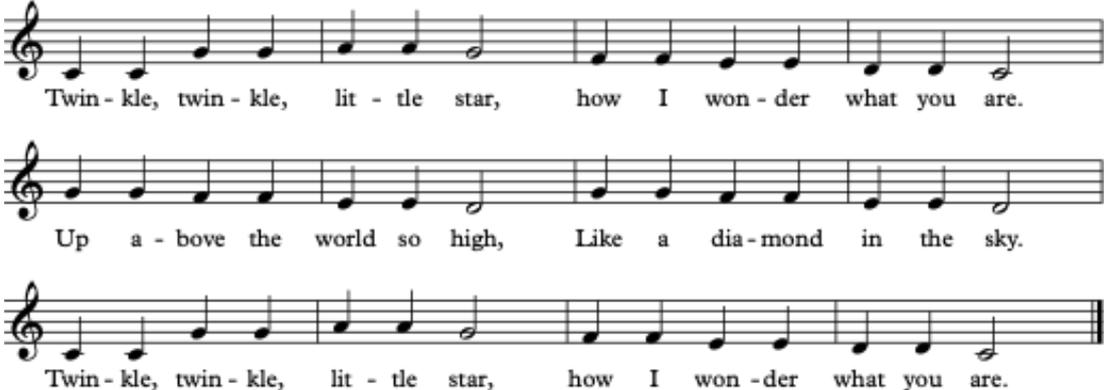
There will be times when we need to shape the direction of music-making but not every lesson needs a fixed set of traditional ideas. Learning a tune or a song can be great – and participants will have ideas about songs and tunes they want to learn.

Principle 3 – Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Stand up comedians have a difficult job, because they constantly have to come up with new material, as the impact of a joke is weakened the more times the audience hear it. However, when an audience goes to see their favourite musician or band live, they want to hear the old classics, because music withstands repetition. More than that - the power of music seems to grow with more listening. Don't think you have to come up with something completely new for every lesson. Don't be afraid to repeat. If something seems to be working - do it again! You'll probably find that the familiarity of repetition brings about a sense of security and confidence from which to gently branch out and take risks with other things; play it quietly, or a little faster.

Music itself is also based on patterns of repetition and imitation - at all kinds of levels. Consider "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star": (Musical Example 2)

Twinkle, Twinkle



Twin - kle, twin - kle, lit - tle star, how I won - der what you are.

Up a - bove the world so high, Like a dia - mond in the sky.

Twin - kle, twin - kle, lit - tle star, how I won - der what you are.

If you don't read music, have a go at following the notation above whilst humming the tune. The very first thing we hear is a note which is immediately *repeated*. This is followed by another *repeated* note, and another! In fact the whole tune seems to be built on a succession of *repeated* notes. Think about the rhythms. Clap the pattern whilst saying the words. It's the same story - a simple idea, *repeated (six times)*: dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, daaaah! Look at the second line of the music. The



tune for “Like a diamond in the sky” is a direct copy of the music for “Up above the world so high.” The last line of the song is exactly the same as the first line. Of course if we sing the whole song again we’re *repeating* all those *repeats*! This is a very straightforward example – but you will find that most music is built from repeated patterns of melody and rhythm.

1c. Planning and Evaluation

Planning

Musical Spaces

We believe that music can, and should, take place all over the place. Music making can happen wherever there are voices to be raised or hands to be clapped. Music can enhance learning in the classroom, build community in the assembly hall or relieve the boredom of the minibus trip.

In music lessons though, we need to consider the physical spaces in which we gather to make music, whether it’s in your own classroom, the school hall or a special Music Room. There is a lot to be said for having a recognisable routine and a space dedicated to music. With gentle repetition of routine, we have seen children with the most challenging behaviour and anxieties learn to come in and sit down quietly, ready and expectant.

Sounds from outside

In an art gallery, the pictures and sculptures are usually presented against a plain, white background in order to draw attention and focus to the work that has been made. Music is a sonic art form and is best against a background of silence - or as few other distracting sounds as is possible. Also, some children may find it difficult to differentiate between the intentional sounds of music making and the distractions of ambient noises.

It’s therefore important to keep external distractions to a minimum. We recommend that you stand and listen to what’s going on around you in any possible music space. Traffic (on the roads, and people moving along the corridors), phones, machinery, and regularly slammed doors can all be very distracting. This will of course apply in reverse - colleagues will thank you for avoiding Samba drumming next to the Library!

Sensory rooms can be really good; full of soft play furnishings and the ability to create mood through changing lights and projections.



What does the room itself sound like?

There's a reason why singing in the shower makes us sound good - it's because the bright, reverberant, tiled surfaces enhance the sound we're making. But banging a drum in the same room would not be a pleasant experience at all – and it would be loud. Think about the sorts of musical activities you'd like to deliver and the spaces you have available. Trying to sing in a tiny office is likely to be unrewarding - use the school hall with its high ceiling. Samba drums may be best outside, in the summer term.

For a quick test, stand quietly in the spaces and listen, click your fingers, clap your hands, sing a song and bang a drum, to see whether the room is conducive to the planned activity. If it's not, is there anything you could do to change the way the space sounds? Putting in (or getting rid of) soft furnishings will change the quality of sound - as will opening or shutting the curtains.

Interruptions

Nothing destroys the magic of a gentle, ambient piece of music quite like another member of staff bursting in through the door to discuss lunch menus. In our experience it's worth trying to minimise distractions as doing so may well make the difference between a good music session and one that is a truly excellent and transformative experience.

It might be a good idea to have a discussion at a staff meeting so that everyone understands the importance of enabling children to focus on the intentional sounds of music-making, and come up with ways to manage any necessary interruptions.

Room Layout

How you might choose to set up your room for making music depends on several different factors including; size and shape of the space, numbers of participants, wheelchair users and the nature of the activity. The guiding principle is to set the space up to make the musical activity accessible and enable children to focus, to maximize learning and participation

As a general rule, we've found it useful to;

- make music a desk free zone (desks pushed to one side to make a clear space).
- Arrange chairs, beanbags or wheel chairs in a circle (or semicircle) so everyone can see each other.



- Give some thought to visual distractions, including out of the windows. Can you arrange seating so that participants have their back to the window, or draw the curtains?

Structuring a session

Length of sessions

We find that different types of music making may be sustained for different lengths of time. For example, enjoying the soft, ambient sound of an iPad app like Bloom may naturally take up a long time whereas a session of frenetic drumming may leave the group worn out in less than 5 minutes. It's surprising what can be achieved in less time than you think if all the resources are to hand and everyone is in place. It's also nice to be able to stop short of that point when attention begins to wander. Music can be extraordinarily powerful and compelling and it's not uncommon to find even the most hard to reach and restless children attentively engaged long after you might expect. Leave everyone looking forward to next time!

Plan of Activities

Go into a session with several possible activities and ideas ready to go so you can adapt to the needs (and mood) of the participants. Don't worry about sticking to a rigid schedule and cramming everything in. You might have four things planned in your allocated 20 minute slot, but if it is going really well when you're still only on the second activity, let that one flow rather than abruptly stopping something that is successful. Conversely don't flog a dead horse! (Although this can be hard to judge as sometimes the real breakthroughs happen just at the moment you've given up hope and decided to move on!)

Pace

This is all to do with how long you sustain each activity for and how quickly you move from one thing to another. This might be related to the type and tempo of the music you make, but not necessarily. If you need to sustain the interest of a group who have short attention spans over the course of a 45 minute lesson, then a fast pace with lots of upbeat activities, moving quickly from one thing to the next will help. Another group might enjoy a more leisurely approach - the music might be the same upbeat material but you'd stay with each song or activity for longer, slowing down the pace with which you move onto the next activity.

Familiarity and repetition

We've already discussed the importance of repetition in music. Use familiarity to



build that sense of security from which you can stretch out and introduce new ideas. Remember. Revisit. Revise. Rehearse.

Progression

Whilst you will revisit and repeat ideas you will also want to move children on, so have a progression plan within each session. For instance, you might start with a percussion activity in which children become familiar with a particular rhythm - which then appears in a song you learn later in the lesson. The lesson might culminate with putting it all together - playing percussion and singing the song.

Variety

Find ways of having moments of quiet, moments of noise, moments where one person is doing something and the rest of the group are listening as you take turns and then moments when everyone is working together. (Remember, if one child is playing, the others can be also actively involved in *listening!*) Think about all the different ways you can create music – use the wooden instruments, use the metal instruments only and so on. Look for light and shade. Think about the musical and emotional arc of each session.

A Typical Musical Session

Hello/Welcome Song

Chances are you can immediately recall the theme music of your favourite TV programme; the synthetic drum that announces 'Eastenders', the urgent pulsing of a BBC news bulletin or the brooding drones that set the scene for your favourite Scandi-noir detective. They use to set the scene, and so can we. One of the most effective ways to do this is to sing a song that welcomes everyone and draws people into the group and into the activity of making music together. There's tremendous power in going round the circle, including children individually by name. It needs to be easy to sing and memorable. (Musical Example 3)

D G D D G A D

Hel-lo Sar- ah_ it's time for mus-ic._ Hel-lo Sar- ah_ it's time for mus-ic_ now!

This simple example (that we've just made up) only uses five notes. Also notice that we've included the guitar chords so go and check out the section on guitars to see how you can easily strum this and change chords with one finger!



Group Warm Up Activity

This might be another song, or a percussion game. Preferably something that feels familiar, immediately involves everyone and gets voice, limbs and fingers working.

Turn Taking

After the noise and excitement of everyone playing together, try something that involves taking turns - passing an instrument around the circle, or each having a go at vocalising in turn into a microphone.

Another Group Activity

Something New

Having played with elements of the familiar, try introducing a new instrument or concept. You might pass around iPads and let the children explore an app they haven't seen before.

The Home Stretch

Return to the reassuringly familiar. Given the effect that music can have on mood and energy levels, you might want to plan something appropriate to what the children are going on to do next. You might, for example, want to calm and quieten the group down after a noisy, boisterous session by using an iPad app like Bloom.

Goodbye Song

In the same way that you used a familiar song or piece of music to welcome children to the start of the music session, it's a nice idea to finish with a familiar piece. Again, finding a way to say goodbye to each child by name can be very effective.

Evaluation

Good evaluation starts at the outset. All too often, evaluation can be regarded as an afterthought - something we realise we ought to give some thought to once the dust has settled. To be most effective, evaluation should be a continual process..

A huge amount has been written about planning and evaluation and there are many fine resources out. Rather than attempt to duplicate all that here, we're simply going to point you to a model that we have found incredibly useful, versatile - and free!



Sounds of Intent

www.soundsofintent.org is a fantastic resource. It's an evaluation framework to help describe and map the musical progress of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. And, like all the best evaluation, it's great at helping with planning and structuring the delivery of music sessions. In a nutshell, Sounds of Intent looks at a child's musical development across 3 domains: REACTIVE, PROACTIVE and INTERACTIVE.

In the REACTIVE domain we are simply considering how the child reacts to and responds to a variety of sounds and musical stimuli.

The PROACTIVE domain is all about how the child engages with actually making and shaping musical sounds.

Finally, the INTERACTIVE domain considers how the child uses sound and music to communicate with others.

Sounds of Intent is a robust system based on a good deal of excellent research and there is a huge amount of fascinating reading available.

Things we love about Sounds of Intent

- It's FREE!
- It's a simple concept yet deep and detailed enough to sustain and support a huge amount of work
- The assessment framework progresses in very nuanced, incremental steps
- You can dip into it and take from it as much or as little as you need
- It can work alongside other assessment methods you might be using
- OFSTED recognise and like it

