

4. Reflecting on working with UNFAMILIAR MUSIC (coded LIGHT GREEN in the 2014 report)

| | <i>Pedagogical Issues/Learning Issues (numbers in the left hand column correspond to the 2014 report)</i> | <i>Question</i> | <i>Suggestions/Discussion/recommendation</i> |
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| 1 | A broad and balanced music education includes engaging with music that is not usually notated using standard staff notation. In addition, contemporary music (including that created using ICT) may not be possible to notate using standard notation. | How can pupils learn to notate their compositions using notation which is appropriate to the music they have created? | <p>Notation does not just need to be Western MS. How can Computer instructions be notated? How can music from other cultures be notated? This can be part of early learning in music ICT and can also be integrated into all musical activity.</p> <p>Collect and share with pupils different kinds of music notation. This allows pupils to explore the whole idea of what music notation is for and helps them to think about what might be an appropriate notation for their music, and for presenting it in a way that it could be revisited at a later date, or so that another person could perform it.</p> |
| 2 | Most pupils are working within a relatively narrow musical context and are unfamiliar with current and contemporary art music traditions. Some teachers may also be unfamiliar with these areas. | How can we broaden pupils' experience of hearing new and challenging music and encourage a debate around what music is? | <p>Broaden listening base of KS3 music by including challenging pieces within existing topics and schemes of work.</p> <p>Contextualise pupil's work (especially when working with ICT) within the broader electroacoustic and live electronics music tradition. Music by Nic Collins, Morton Subotnick, Stockhausen, Pauline Oliveros could be used. Also use this music to encourage discussion of 'what is music?'</p> |
| 3 | There is a temptation to have a musical offer that is familiar to and already liked by pupils in the belief that this is the best way to secure engagement and on-going commitment to the music curriculum. Ofsted have said that "performance and enjoyment are not enough" (Nov 2013). | How can teachers take on this key role of educating their pupils' sonic sensibilities? | <p>The key way to do this is through the design and implementation of authentic, open-ended compositional tasks mediated by appropriate technologies.</p> <p>Sounds themselves can be explored, using both acoustic and ICT sources.</p> <p>"Do not shy away from challenging music: Pupils might know what they like, but they also like what they know. If they do not know, yet cannot like – yet!" (Listen Imagine Compose report, Nov 2013).</p> |

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| 4 | There is a temptation to have a musical offer that is familiar to and already liked by pupils in the belief that this is the best way to secure engagement and on-going commitment to the music curriculum. Ofsted have said that “performance and enjoyment are not enough” (November 2013). | What is familiar to the pupils in <i>this</i> school? What is unfamiliar? What will stretch them? | Engaging and educating for the ‘unfamiliar’ takes time and energy; students will need to be challenged and nurtured in equal measure. |
| 5 | Many pupils will have a narrow experience of music and are likely to have similarly narrow assumptions about what music is and how it is represented. | How can students be challenged to unpick their intellectual assumptions about what music is and how it is represented? | Asking this question can stretch pupil thinking. Can be incorporated into KS3 and KS4 lessons from the outset. |
| 7 | Most pupils are working within a relatively narrow musical context and are unfamiliar with current and contemporary art music traditions. Some teachers may also be unfamiliar with these areas. | How can students be encouraged to move outside their own musical comfort zone and current experience as instrumentalists and embrace alternative models of musical composition? | Ask instrumental teachers to undertake composing activities during instrumental lessons. |

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| 12 | Most pupils are working within a relatively narrow musical context that is informed by pop and urban music. | How can students' affinity to beat or metrical musical frameworks be ameliorated and re-conceptualised within compositional projects? | First pupils need to be introduced to music like this, then make it. Possible simple way is via film music? There is lots of contemporary repertoire that has "filmic" sound worlds, and also lots of contemporary repertoire that has a strong beat and/or references to pop and jazz that could be used to bridge this gap. |
| 13 | At first sight the popular music experience of a class might seem very distant from contemporary art music. | How can the distance between unfamiliar, contemporary art music and popular music be bridged? | Choose listening examples of music from the outset which challenge pupil views of music. Common formal structures such as periodic phrasing, harmonic conventions, extended phrases and developmental variation are frequently not found in contemporary art music. However, the conceptual focus and use of metaphors to determine structure might provide the bridge between popular music and pupils' personal expression. The use of metaphor, often the title of the piece and an abstraction, may be capable of resonating in multiple directions for the imaginative listener, and may provide the bridge to comprehension and understanding. |
| 23 | Too few musical lessons are musical (Ofsted 2013). Pupils get stuck during compositional process. They need help with initial ideas and in how to develop them. | What processes can teachers use to help pupils understand the unfamiliar and develop their composing practice? | What words are needed to talk about music? Do these words help pupils "think" about music? Old National Curriculum = 'appraising'; lessons on music terminologies in use. Good teacher modelling. Take pupils inside a composer's way of thinking, their values and aesthetic commitments through intensive musical workshoping using the language and syntax of composers. This is a critical part of the process of opening of minds to the unfamiliar and making it relevant to pupil's learning. Pupils learn how to think inside musical processes as part of their developing composing practice. <i>'Everybody in our class can now listen to Gadget and get their head around it and get into the music. Once you have got your head around the language, once you have done this then you enjoy it.'</i> Pupil |
| 24 | At first sight the popular music experience of a class might seem very distant from contemporary art music. | How can teachers help pupils make unfamiliar music relevant to their own musical lives? (bridging question again) | Challenging questioning on simple music, as well as more complex types. Pupils bring their own musical experiences into any given composing task. When presented with and immersed in unfamiliar music, material and processes, pupils make it relevant through appropriation and assimilation. |

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| 27 | Some teachers avoid using challenging or unfamiliar musical examples in lessons because they believe that this will make engagement and enjoyment of the curriculum less likely. | How can unfamiliar music be made relevant to pupils who have relatively narrow musical diets? | <p>Link to art - what is the musical equivalent of, say, Pollock? Picasso?</p> <p>'Relevance' is created by the participants and in particular through the ethos generated by the workshop leader/teacher. Hand over the tools for creativity; Experimenting, playing, exploring, relating to personal experience. Don't worry about relevance! It's the empowerment and opportunity to create / hear / understand that will make it relevant.</p> |
| 28 | Some teachers avoid using challenging or unfamiliar musical examples in lessons because they believe that this will make engagement and enjoyment of the curriculum less likely. | How can teachers encourage pupils to move away from styles/genres that are popular with young people and yet offer authentic musical activities? | <p>Teenagers very aware of style and genre, being outside this immediacy actually has strengths in the teaching and learning process.</p> <p>Style is not important. Compositional models really work, but it's not about imitating style. The really useful skills are to understand compositional fundamentals that may apply to all forms of music-making - the material elements of composing.</p> |
| 32 | Pupils often struggle with the idea of creating pieces of music alone and find it difficult to find an initial idea they are happy to work with. | How can pupils create individually whilst supported by the group? | <p>Whole class improvisation and performing lessons.</p> <p>Work with pupils as a whole class creative ensemble. This can allow pupils to develop complex levels of musical and social knowledge and roots music as an inherently collaborative social art. The creative ensemble format provides a critical starting point for the development of ideas and the challenges of judging the value and worthiness of ideas.</p> |