Mapping The Magical Toy Box against a multi-tiered curriculum offer

Introduction

Accessible online, Aurora Orchestra's resources provide a magical world of music and imagination for teachers to explore with their pupils, with activities, stories, recordings, films and lesson plans to help bring music into the classroom. The resources can support a variety of EHCP targets for SEND settings, with adaptations and extensions available for children of varying ages and abilities. They are structured in eight flexible strands of learning, providing teachers with the flexibility required to adapt their curriculum offer to their individual class needs. These strands comprise:

- **Experiential**: This strand is best suited to children who engage well by listening and doing.
- **Sensory**: This strand is ideal for those with high sensory needs.
- **Movement**: Learners who enjoy moving and learn best by doing so will benefit from these activities.
- **Rhythm**: Work in this area involves reading, copying and improvising elementary rhythm patterns.
- **Communication**: This strand will suit children with EHCP targets around early stages of communication.
- **Making**: Learners who enjoy crafting things with their hands will engage with these activities.
- **Cognition**: This strand is most appropriate for children who are already accessing National Curriculum programmes of study.
- **Singing**: Children who are motivated by singing, vocalising and signing will enjoy these activities.

Teachers are provided with the option to use either a video or audio track for almost every activity, freeing them up to support learning in a more interactive and hands-on way. This also encourages a process-based approach to learning, where teachers are more able to facilitate the creative process through modelling, guiding, and offering opportunities to experiment and refine ideas and skills, without necessarily always having to lead.

Intrinsic to the creation of the resources is the idea of co-production. It is our aim that through co-producing these resources and working collectively with our partners, we will be able to make the programme more sustainable, impactful and meaningful for learners, teachers, and ourselves. The programme has been carefully designed to enable classroom teachers to develop their own skills in using music regularly in the classroom, with particular support for teachers without specialist music training. A regular linked CPD programme is designed to help teachers build confidence using the resources and to provide channels for feedback and discussion with practitioners, enabling continuous evaluation and evidence-based improvements to the programme. This document offers insight into ways the *Aurora Orchestra and the Magical Toy Box* programme provides learning opportunities for a range of learners, mapped against a multi-tiered curriculum offer.

Pre-Formal Learners

This curriculum pathway is designed for learners with profound and multiple learning needs, often made more complex by sensory impairments. These learners require a curriculum that is bespoke and tailored to their individual engagement profiles: this is structured around an **engagement model**, with reference to the Rochford review[1] and guidance on this as a statutory requirement on students accessing non subject specific learning. In this model, Creative Arts teachers promote inclusivity through high levels of engagement and nurture the key behaviours of Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence, and Initiation. The Magical Toy Box provides opportunities for learners to rehearse these in a great variety of ways:

Exploration: Ability to build on an initial response	• Extensions onto classroom percussion instruments provide an opportunity for learners to move beyond the initial engagement with a stimulus, to then using it as a tool to access learning and discover new skills. • The audio library hosts a range of tracks that are used in a wide variety of activities, encouraging pupils to discover and explore new aspects and musical features and offering pupils several opportunities to demonstrate engagement through exploration. For example, the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy music is used in various ways to facilitate pulse, timbre, rhythm, and characterisation work. Additionally, the River Story music is used in several sensory activities, which facilitate exploration through multi-sensory listening, story-telling and craft based activities. The resources are designed for activities and stimuli to be repeatedly presented to pupils over the course of the term, providing ample opportunity for exploration to become more established.
Realisation: Independent interaction with and further exploration of a stimulus	• Classroom instrument extensions allow learners to apply their developed skills and/or knowledge and expand upon their initial interaction of the stimulus. These also provide opportunities for learners to display behaviours of engagement and attentive interaction with both the physical (percussion) and aural stimuli. • Multi-sensory activities provide learners the chance to display behaviours that show they want more control of the activity and/or stimulus. This becomes established when the newly developed skills and knowledge or requesting more bubbles or a turn of handling the rocket is transferred into different contexts and/or environments as requesting more/less of something or displaying behaviours demonstrating they want a turn.
Anticipation: Active response and engagement	• As learners become familiar with the content through repetition and movement that underscores musical structures, they have opportunities to predict, anticipate change, and demonstrate this understanding through movement. For example, activities such as the *Quack back game* and *Find the pulse* demonstrate this and provide opportunities for extensions. • Through structured repetition, learners recognise the activities and display a positive emotional response to the learning environment. The breadth of activities provide a range of opportunities to demonstrate what learners know and can do, through their own specific responses often displayed through affectations, such as: blinking, moving hands, and attending.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rochford-review-final-report

Persistence: Sustained attendance leading to active engagement	• Built-in scaffolding of interaction and engagement in the *Multi-sensory listening activities* provides opportunities to develop sustained attention within the stimuli, with a more immersive experience encouraging learners to engage more with an activity. • The resources have in-built provisions for repeated learning: several activities have 'recap' videos that allow learners to continually revisit the activities, which allows them to develop their resilience and reinforce learning. The schemes of work are structured to promote functional and cumulative repetition of activities each week, often gradually increasing in complexity as learners become more familiar with the content. Additionally, suggested extension ideas and options encourage teachers to go beyond the initial activity if they believe learners' skills and knowledge can be developed more thoroughly.
Initiation: Independent reactive response(s)	• Repetition of activities such as *Stopping and starting* provide opportunities for learners to independently and spontaneously respond to the changing musical stimulus; these activities have built-in allowances and flexible adaptations for learners with processing delays to demonstrate initiation behaviours. • Activities such as *Exploring different sounds* encourage learners to investigate and respond to the stimuli in different and imaginative ways to produce movements in response to the music. The flexibility in using the audio tracks for these types of activity enables learners to respond to a stimulus in their own way that is meaningful to them. • Initiation behaviours can be indicative of learners' cultural development, as they demonstrate their willingness to participate in and positive reactive responses to the musical stimulus.

In pre-formal settings, it is also key that the resources allow for improvisation. Teachers are provided with the tools for **meaningful improvisatory pedagogy** through the audio and activity library, enabling them to adapt to their particular learners' needs and respond to their interests. The audio tracks can be used in a range of contexts and ways beyond what is suggested in the activities, which only scratches the surface of their possible applications. For example, the loop tracks for the Bouncing Ball music can be used as a basis for composition, improvisation, and instrument work. The Mama track can also be used as a basis for an improvised 'Hello song', providing opportunities for learners to respond in their own time and incorporate any sounds they emit into the music. These tools provide opportunities for learners to explore real-time creative musical decision-making, draw on developed skills and knowledge, and display learner-specific behaviours of engagement and attentive interaction with the musical stimulus.

Semi-Formal Learners

A semi-formal curriculum is adaptive and responsive to the needs of the pupil, encouraging them to access a more formal subject curriculum through a flexible and holistic approach to learning. These learners are accessing content in different ways: they are acquiring knowledge through carefully sequenced and increasingly familiar learning opportunities, working at content in a way that allows them to build up skills and apply them to a different situation. However, they may still have high sensory needs, present with significant observable anxiety and have complex requirements from a wellbeing perspective:

Rhythm and pulse	• The activities in the **Rhythm** strand involve copying, reading, and improvising elementary rhythm patterns. The rhythm card activities are structured sequentially to enable a gradual introduction to more complex rhythms, eventually working towards putting them together with a piece of music. • A good sense of pulse is a key foundation for much music-making: the activities in the **Rhythm** and **Movement** strands provide several scaffolded opportunities for learners to gradually develop a sense of pulse. The Find the pulse activities provide excellent opportunities for learners to develop an awareness of pulse through simple repeated rhythm patterns that also underscore the musical structure, tying in another key element of music making.
Singing and pitch	• The **Singing** strand in the schemes of work presents repeated learning of the Making Friends and Let's Get Ready songs by going through each section week by week, to culminate in a full-length performance of the song. This follows the educational formula of encountering, exploring, and developing understanding to promote learners to build up their vocalisation and communication skills. For learners who progress to developing their understanding of this stimulus, other interrelated areas of music can then be brought in such as dynamics (as a result of more confident and supported singing) and phrasing.
Timbre and texture	• There are several opportunities for learners to encounter and explore timbres they may not usually come across, in activities such as *Exploring different sounds* and *Meet the instruments*. Particularly the latter activity provides an excellent opportunity for learner's to increase their objective cultural capital as they are introduced to three key orchestral instruments and attend to high-quality recordings of performance. The resources provide a vast array of high-quality musical experiences and access to skill development that learners may not have otherwise.
Cognition	• Introductory and discursive activities provide platforms for autonomous and dynamic learning, supporting learners in a discussion and extending their learning.

Communication	• The **Communication** strand includes vocalisation and storytelling activities which build up over the scheme of work, progressing to learners being able to attend to a narrative supported by rich visuals such as props, images, and audio tracks that relate to the story. • The **Sensory** and **Communication** strands provide learners with opportunities to develop skills in listening, expressive and receptive communication; such as in the *Magic cupcake game* and *Music to start a session and sing hello*. • The resources support a range of opportunities for bespoke interventions in the context of a communication-rich environment. This includes AAC devices, signage, emission, and opportunities to provide commentary with autonomy. • Activities that encourage expressive music-making, such as *Exploring dynamics* and *Movement and character* allow the learners to demonstrate they are understanding through their ability to label and perform emotions.
Cultural Capital	• Through active participation in music activities, learners are given the opportunity to acquire and develop their objective and embodied cultural capital. The vast majority of the resources promote active participation, even when a teacher chooses to use the video resource.
SMSC	• Activities such as *The Sad Bear, The Friendship Box*, and *How music makes us feel* provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development by enabling them to acquire the tools to acknowledge their own and others' emotions, label feelings effectively, and explore the consequences of their behaviours. This generalisation of learning equips learners with functional skills they can then apply in future community and/or workplace settings.

The schemes of work aid the creative process through gradual and cumulative extensions of repeated activities, providing learners a flexible structure to encounter, explore, and eventually develop their awareness and understanding of several key areas of music, as well as allowing for establishing self-confidence and pleasure in the increasing success. The resource provides multiple opportunities for learning to be accessed through engaged and motivated doing, providing space and time for learners to practice and progressively develop their skills and knowledge with teacher support.

Formal Learners

Formal learners are able to receive a modified and accessible version of the curriculum, being more cognitively able to access National Curriculum subjects whilst still requiring additional interventions to enable them to fully access and engage with educational activities. Music is made relevant and meaningful through the different activity strands, providing a multitude of opportunities for a range of transferable skills and knowledge to be developed:

Rhythm and pulse

- When incorporated into a scheme of work, the **Rhythm** strand is sequenced to enable a generalisation of the knowledge acquired. For instance, key rhythm skills are extended in situations where learners work with a variable pulse, recall rhythmic patterns, or compose their own rhythms. Loop tracks are provided to encourage structured composition and improvisation to allow learners to personalise their engagement with the stimulus, and ultimately extend their learning.
- Rhythm card activities offer huge transferable skills and knowledge to learners, with connections to literacy and numeracy. Even if the knowledge is demonstrating to be more difficult to acquire, skills such as reading ahead and recognising links between the aural and visual are particularly transferable into other areas of the curriculum. Additionally in a wider context, if/when the knowledge is acquired, the step for the learner to then be able to engage with community music-making is minimised, for example.
- The **Movement** strand provides a series of activities that are based upon the same framework but can be sequenced to introduce more complex actions on the same musical stimulus, predominantly relating to rhythm and pulse work. When delivered as part of a scheme of work, these activities are sequenced to develop learning by introducing a movement concept and gradually applying it to different and increasingly complex musical contexts. Good pulse work supports self-regulation and promotes structure, particularly for anxious learners; these skills are developed through activities such as *Stopping* and *starting*, and *Find the pulse*.

Singing and pitch

- The *Making Friends song* activity is structured in three learning stages as part of the **Singing** strand in a scheme of work, to allow for the processes of good singing to develop over time. The **Communication** strand additionally incorporates activities such as the *Magic Spell* and *Magic cupcake game* that are energising vocal warm-ups that promote good vocal health, breathing and posture, encouraging learners to safely develop their vocalisation skills. Through weekly repetition, skills of good vocalisation techniques will be developed which are highly transferable into not only the learning setting but wider community and/or workplace settings.
- Through structured repetition and increasing familiarity of activities such as *Exploring pitch* and *Exploring dynamics*, learners have opportunities to respond independently to pitch and dynamic changes and demonstrate understanding, indicating with simple actions or affectations specific to them. These activities encourage learners to develop their awareness of weight (loud/quiet) and size (high/low), providing them with transferable skills to other areas of the curriculum such as maths.

Timbre and texture	• Learners are able to develop their skills and knowledge of these through the **Experiential** strand where they encounter and explore different instruments, qualities of sound, as well as other interrelated dimensions of music. For example, the *Exploring different sounds* activities provide opportunities to develop their understanding of pitch, timbre and texture and respond creatively through movement. These activities offer enormous transferable skills to learners with connections to coordination and motor skills through their reactive movements, as well as sorting and grouping. In particular, *Exploring different sounds in two groups* provides an excellent opportunity for learners to develop autonomy when responding/not responding to cues that apply to each group.
Cognition	• The **Cognition** strand presents repeated opportunities for learners to attend to what others say, and use creative thinking and role play to encounter, explore and develop their sensory regulation and tools to acknowledge their own and others' feelings effectively.
Communication	• Storytelling and narrative-based activities provide learners with the opportunity to represent their own thoughts and ideas, demonstrating through child-led play an understanding of what they experience. For example, the various sensory table activities provide starting points for expanding and developing communication and narrative skills.
Cultural Capital	• The *Classroom discussion* activity provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to acquire new knowledge and increase their cultural capital by learning about the Nutcracker ballet, and the composer Tchaikovsky. This activity also provides a platform for autonomous and dynamic learning, as the pupils are supported in a discussion and extending their learning. • The incorporation of the Kodály method for teaching notation allows for a gradual and cumulative introduction to staff notation. These activities complement the development of aural skills, improvisation, memorisation and composition; they open up the possibility and reduce the barrier for pupils to go on and be taught music independently both in class and after they have left school.
SMSC	• Introductory activities such as the *Classroom discussion* encourage learners to bank on prior learning and develop links with PSHE and learning to learn skills, as well as demonstrate their social development. • Expressive music-making facilitated through activities such as *Movement and character* are useful for even competent music makers. There are excellent links to PSHE in these **Communication** activities as it helps support learners who have targets surrounding labelling emotions, reading body language and facial expressions.