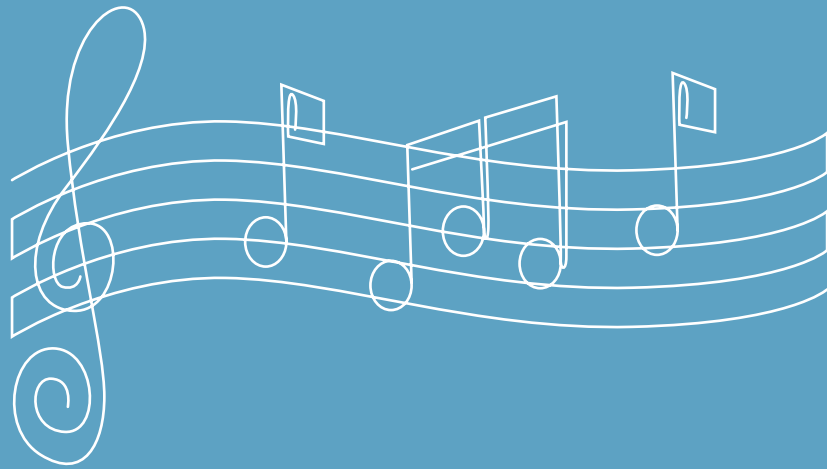


Music

Guidelines for Teachers of Students with

MILD

General Learning Disabilities



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Rationale and introduction

Music is an integral part of the lives of adults and students alike. It is a language, and as such provides a medium of communication for emotions, thoughts, and feelings. Every individual has an innate sense of musicality that can be developed and explored through musical activities.

Rationale

Music can promote an awareness of cultural identity. Nations throughout the world have individual stores of music, which reflect their history and cultural heritage.

Elements of pattern, structure, sound, movement, and rhythm inherent in the environment in which we live, are reflected in music. Consequently, music can provide a vehicle for a deeper understanding of the world around us.

Introduction

Music has an important role to play in the curriculum for students with mild general learning disabilities. It facilitates the development of personal, social, mental, and physical skills, which will enable the student to interpret and adapt to his/her environment in a more competent and comprehensive fashion.

The music curriculum provides every student with opportunities to progress to a level at which they can derive pleasure and enjoyment from participating as individuals or in group musical activities through listening, responding, composing, and performing. There is a multiplicity of ways in which students can actively participate in musical activities, regardless of their ability level. Providing developmentally appropriate musical experiences for students helps to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence, thus improving their self-image.

Many students with mild general learning disabilities have been exposed to failure in different areas of the curriculum. Often this failure becomes generalised, resulting in the pupil feeling inadequate in all areas. The music curriculum encourages students to respond to musical experiences in an individual manner, thus highlighting the value of each student's response.

Music, by its very nature, can be enjoyable and exciting for students. Its motivational qualities make it an ideal subject for integration across the curriculum, enabling students to absorb concepts and knowledge that might otherwise seem daunting.

The strands

The strands of *The Primary School Curriculum: Music* (pp. 6-11) are

- **listening and responding**
- **performing**
- **composing**

These strands are very much inter-related, and often music lessons in the classroom will include elements of all three.

Listening and responding

Listening and responding are crucial communication and life skills. In the listening and responding strand, students are encouraged to listen to both musical and environmental sounds and are gradually provided with the vocabulary to discuss these sounds effectively. Musical concepts are outlined in the curriculum and the students are made aware of these through experience and discussion. These subsequently provide the framework for constructive, enjoyable, and discriminatory listening experiences. Through their listening experiences, students are made aware of the emotive qualities of music and are encouraged to discuss the feelings aroused in them by particular musical extracts. There are many opportunities within the listening and responding strand to encourage concentration, response, and communication with others.

Performing

The students are provided with opportunities for musical performance, for example singing songs, rhythm sequences, chants, performing instrumental pieces, and participating in class and individual compositions. These performances can take place in the classroom, in a forum where the rest of the school is present, or as events for the wider community. All aspects of musical performances, whether performing, listening, watching, or responding, promote social interaction and therefore help to develop social skills, confidence, and self-esteem.

Composing

Composition in the music curriculum covers a broad range of activities and can involve anything from choosing objects or instruments to convey an idea through sound, to composing tunes and musical pieces. Rhythmic and melodic ostinato (a constantly repeated musical pattern) can be composed based on everyday language that is familiar to students, for example rain-y day, rain-y day. Students are capable of varying levels of musical composition and this develops and nourishes their creative abilities.

Expression and social interaction

Composition and performance are important elements in the music curriculum. These elements facilitate worthwhile and productive involvement for students of all levels of ability. Compositional activities range from simple sound sequences to reflect themes, for example a storm, to rhythm sequences and chants, to simple tunes and songs. The use of music technology can be an effective tool in helping students to compose musical pieces. Opportunities for students to express their individuality through composition, and to experience the rewards of having their work listened to and appreciated, are important factors in the development of confidence and self-esteem. Preparing group performances involves social interaction and teamwork on the part of students, teachers, and possibly people from the wider community, and can serve as an effective tool in the acquisition and development of students' social skills, equipping them for other occasions when they will have to function as part of a group in order to achieve something worthwhile.

Aims of the music curriculum

Listening and responding to both musical and environmental sounds provides many opportunities for language development.

The aims outlined in *The Primary School Curriculum: Music* (p.12) envisage students developing an awareness of music in its many forms, and by doing so enabling them to express ideas, feelings, and experiences individually and collectively. Through participation in musical activities, the curriculum also aims to develop the students' confidence and self-esteem and to equip them with skills and knowledge that will serve them in their future lives.

These aims are the same for all students with mild general learning disabilities. An important factor in achieving these aims will be an awareness on the part of all the partners in education of the need to ensure that these students receive the same musical input as other pupils, and that they are constantly involved in musical experiences appropriate to their age and abilities. The importance of allowing them to create and achieve, as a result of being involved in appropriately differentiated musical tasks and experiences, cannot be over emphasised. Through the medium of music, many essential life skills can be learned.

Life skills learned through music

Language and communication

Students with mild general learning disabilities often have deficits in language and communication skills. Providing them with the vocabulary to discuss the musical elements and lyrics in a song can help to expand their vocabulary and foster confidence in the use of language.

Songs provide students with vocabulary and sentence structures that they often don't encounter in general conversation. Through using and discussing these elements of language, students learn to adapt them for use in other communication contexts.

Through their listening experiences, students are made aware of the emotive qualities of music and are given the appropriate vocabulary to discuss the feelings aroused in them by particular musical extracts. As students gradually learn the correct vocabulary to discuss these qualities effectively, they acquire a framework for constructive, enjoyable, and discriminatory listening experiences. They also learn the vocabulary to express their own feelings.

Encouraging students to project their voices, and highlighting the connection between breathing properly and singing effectively helps them in mastering the mechanics of speaking audibly and coherently. Learning to play a musical instrument, such as the tin whistle or the recorder, will strengthen the students' mouth muscles and may also prove helpful in fostering coherent communication skills.

Reading

The development of phonological awareness is essential to the acquisition of reading skills. Many students with mild general learning disabilities have difficulty acquiring phonological skills due to poor visual and auditory discrimination. Listening to and exploring sounds in musical excerpts will help develop auditory discrimination, while viewing and discussing sound sources will promote visual discrimination.

Composing rhythm sequences that correspond with spoken words can be very useful in developing an awareness of the way in which words can be broken down into syllables. While speaking the words and clapping or tapping corresponding rhythms, students can learn some of the basic elements of reading and spelling in an enjoyable and motivated manner.

Personal and social skills

Students are encouraged to interact through discussion of musical pieces and through constructive appraisal of each other's performance and compositions. Singing in unison, part singing, movement to music, performance of rhythm sequences, call and response, instrumental performances, and discussion of live and recorded performances of others are among the many facets of the music curriculum that encourage students to interact with each other and with others in the wider community.

Music is an integral part of the students' environment. Equipping them with the skills to listen, to describe, and to appreciate music constructively contributes to the development of important social skills. Students should be encouraged to bring in their favourite musical pieces for inclusion in the music class.

Student participation in vocal and instrumental (percussion or melodic) musical performances will develop confidence and self-esteem.

Physical skills

Movement to music and playing instruments develop student's balance, co-ordination, and motor skills. Blowing and positioning instruments, such as the tin whistle and kazoo, in order to achieve the optimum sound, develops muscles around the mouth, and this can facilitate easier speech and communication. Learning proper breathing in order to sing more effectively, alerts the student to the connection between breathing and performance in physical activity.

Mathematical skills

Rhythm is an important component of the music programme. In learning to recognise and imitate simple rhythm patterns, students are also learning sequencing skills. The left to right orientation of the scale, and the position of the notes on instruments, for example a xylophone or a keyboard, help in the development of spatial awareness. The scale can be likened to the number line in mathematics and practice in the identification of musical intervals on the scale can help students in their work on relationships between numbers on the number line.

Addressing potential areas of difficulty for students with mild general learning disabilities

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Listening skills	Constructive listening to sounds and music.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with short musical excerpts and single sounds initially. ■ Give students something specific to listen for in a musical extract. ■ Make simple sounds more interesting by telling brief stories (for example, paper-rustling in a story about a little girl hearing her present being wrapped the night before her birthday). ■ Make the listening environment as free as possible from other sounds. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Short-term memory	Retention of rhythm sequences or song lyrics.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use frequent repetition. ■ Reinforce work from previous music sessions at the beginning of each new session. ■ Take opportunities at transition times during the day to sing a song or clap a rhythm. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Short attention span	Concentration and application.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change activities often during music sessions. ■ Involve students in movement to music at regular intervals during music sessions. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Motor skills: fine and gross	Playing instruments. Movement to music. Recording compositions in standard notation or pictorial/graphic form.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 'Match' the instrument to the student. ■ Watch the student as he/she moves to music and work on developing the movements that he/she seems most comfortable with, gradually extending the range of movement. ■ Use alternative musical sources, for example a tape recorder, computer software. ■ Cut out notes/pictures and have students place these in an appropriate place on backing sheets for the representation of note/rhythm sequences. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Spatial awareness	Strategic use of space while moving to music. Understanding musical intervals and left to right orientation of scale.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stress the importance of finding a space in which to move freely. ■ Give students plenty of opportunities to move to music. ■ Enlist the help of auxiliary staff to monitor movement and guard against accident and injury. ■ Provide opportunities to experiment with, play, or witness the playing of instruments where left to right orientation is obvious (for example, keyboard, xylophone). ■ Relate work on the scale to work on the number line in maths. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Auditory discrimination	Appreciation of the use of musical elements (pulse, duration, pitch, etc.).
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accentuate elements in a musical piece, song or composition using visual aids and physical gestures. 	

▲ Potential area of difficulty	= Implications for learning
Visual discrimination	Ability to follow musical notation (standard, graphic/pictorial). Ability to find notes on keyboard for short pitch sequences, for example for ostinato (constantly repeated note pattern) accompaniment.
+ Possible strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use tactile materials. ■ Use clearly defined pictures and symbols for classroom display of pitch or rhythm sequences. ■ Use coloured stickers on the notes to be played, withdrawing these as the player gets accustomed to the position of the notes. 	

School planning

The school plan will outline strategies for the inclusion of all students in the activities contained in the music curriculum. It will outline how the curriculum will be differentiated in order to facilitate the needs of these students.

It will provide a record of musical resources both within and outside the school, and will detail suggestions in relation to songs, listening materials, and performance activities. It will also provide for the involvement of visiting musicians and people from the wider community in the musical activities of the school.

The *Primary School Curriculum: Music, Teacher Guidelines* (pp. 14-35) gives detailed advice on the issue of school planning for music. However, there are some areas which merit particular consideration when planning music education for students with mild general learning disabilities.

Curriculum planning

Additional aims

While the aims outlined in the music curriculum are applicable to students of all abilities, the school plan might pay particular attention to the following aims in the case of students with mild general learning disabilities:

- to ensure the appropriate differentiation of musical activities so that each student will experience the satisfaction of achieving goals in the music curriculum appropriate to his/her level of ability (this is further outlined in the differentiation section)
- to be constantly aware of the importance of fostering and developing the confidence and self-esteem of the students as they are guided through their musical learning
- to involve students, as far as possible, in activities across all strands of the music curriculum
- to acquire and adapt instruments with a view to giving all students the experience of playing an instrument successfully
- to provide musical extracts and songs appropriate to the age and development of each student
- to explore the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool that may enhance the delivery of the music curriculum to students with mild general learning disabilities

- to outline how the students musical experiences will facilitate the development of the following skills:
 - language and communication skills
 - fine and gross motor skills
 - physical co-ordination
 - spatial awareness
 - left to right orientation
 - sequencing skills
 - long and short term memory
 - confidence and self-esteem.

Home-school communication

Strategies may be outlined in the school plan which will facilitate communication between school and home regarding musical activities in the classroom. Consideration should be given to the following strategies:

- taping songs, compositions, performances, etc. in school, and giving the students their own copy to bring home (tapes may be rotated, with students bringing them home for a specified number of nights)
- compiling a newsletter once a term ‘reporting’ musical events in the classroom
- videoing musical events involving the students and encouraging the students to take turns bringing home the video (it might be an idea to devise a list of discussion points to accompany the video as this will facilitate discussion and language development at home)
- organising regular performances to which families and friends are invited.

Assessment

The school plan should outline specific methods of assessment for use in the school. It is important to be aware that students with mild general learning disabilities may suffer from low self-esteem or lack of self-confidence and to ensure that assessment is carried out in a supportive manner, avoiding situations where the student may experience failure in any way (see pages 86-87).

Integration of ICT

The school plan should outline strategies for the use of ICT in the music classroom, and the acquisition and maintenance of appropriate instruments, hardware, and software.

Organisational planning

The following are additional issues that need particular consideration in relation to planning for students with mild general learning disabilities.

Safety issues

Students with mild general learning disabilities often have attendant problems in areas of balance and co-ordination. The school plan should include guidelines for teachers on how to ensure the safety of students during movement and dance activities. Appropriate strategies, for example, the use of mats to ensure a soft landing, and the allocation of classroom assistants to monitor the movements of particular students, will need to be outlined.

Some students (for example, those with behavioural problems, tics, hyperactivity etc.) will need plenty of space in which to move and possible one-to-one supervision. It may be necessary to allocate a specific spacious area in the school for musical movement and dance, or to limit the number of pupils involved at any one time.

Safety in the transport, use, and storage of musical instruments should be discussed. Strategies in the making of ‘home-made’ instruments should be discussed as these can sometimes pose unexpected dangers. They should be sturdy and well made, with no sharp edges.

Instruments

The school plan should outline strategies for the use of instruments appropriate to the developmental and physical abilities of the student. Strategies for the allocation and location of musical instruments throughout the school should be outlined.

The school plan should include decisions on what pitched instruments are to be taught in the school and the progression and level of instruction to be provided in this area. Arrangements for teachers exchanging classes, for instrumental tuition, for tutors coming in, and for the involvement of volunteers from the wider school community are issues that should be addressed in the school plan.

Student progress

Students with mild general learning disabilities may progress along the continuum of musical skills in a less uniform manner than other students. It is important that a plan for assessment is in place in the school, so that each teacher will have a clear picture of students' musical capabilities as they join his/her class.

Classroom planning

All students have varying levels of musical ability and it is very important to provide a classroom environment where each student can progress at his/her own pace, gaining satisfaction and enjoyment from the musical challenges presented.

Planning for a broad and balanced music curriculum

By assessing the student's musical and other abilities, he/she can be catered for at an appropriate point in the continuum of musical development.

Some elements in musical development

National music of Ireland and of other countries.	Visits to outside venues for musical performances.	Development of auditory perception and discrimination.
Responding to music through moving, talking, dancing, singing, writing, composing, drawing/painting.	Development of listening skills and concentration span.	Multi-sensory approaches to the teaching of music.
Opportunities for composition and improvisation in sound, rhythm, and melody.	Adaptation of content to accord with students' progress along the continuum of musical development.	Opportunities for students to perform for class, school, and community audiences.
Performances from visiting musicians.	Experience in the use of a wide variety of home-made and manufactured percussion instruments.	Integration with other curricular areas.
Musical extracts and songs from a wide variety of styles and genres.	Experience in the use of a variety of melodic instruments.	Development of social skills through musical activities.
A variety of assessment methods.	Information about other instruments and families of instruments not available in the classroom.	Movement to music.

Teacher planning

The school will provide the context within which the teacher will plan his/her music curriculum. In planning for the needs of students with mild general learning disabilities, the following points should be considered:

Time

Music lessons with students with mild general learning disabilities should be short and should occur a few times a week as this will keep up their interest and avoid the loss of enthusiasm or concentration as a result of lengthy music sessions. Different strands of the curriculum can be tackled over periods of time. The teacher needs to plan in advance how he/she is going to organise the material to be covered into suitable time slots over the school year.

Resources

It may be necessary to match specific resources in the school to individual students, or to acquire new ones in order to suit their particular needs.

Health and safety aspects

Movement to music and the use of electronic equipment and musical instruments in the classroom can pose safety risks and the teacher, together with the students, needs to establish a clear set of rules for these activities.

Classroom assistants

The involvement of classroom assistants and other personnel in working and helping individual students must be discussed and clearly outlined.

Cross-curricular thematic planning

Music lends itself easily to integration with other areas of the curriculum, and planning for this integration in advance allows the teacher to reinforce musical concepts in other areas of the curriculum.

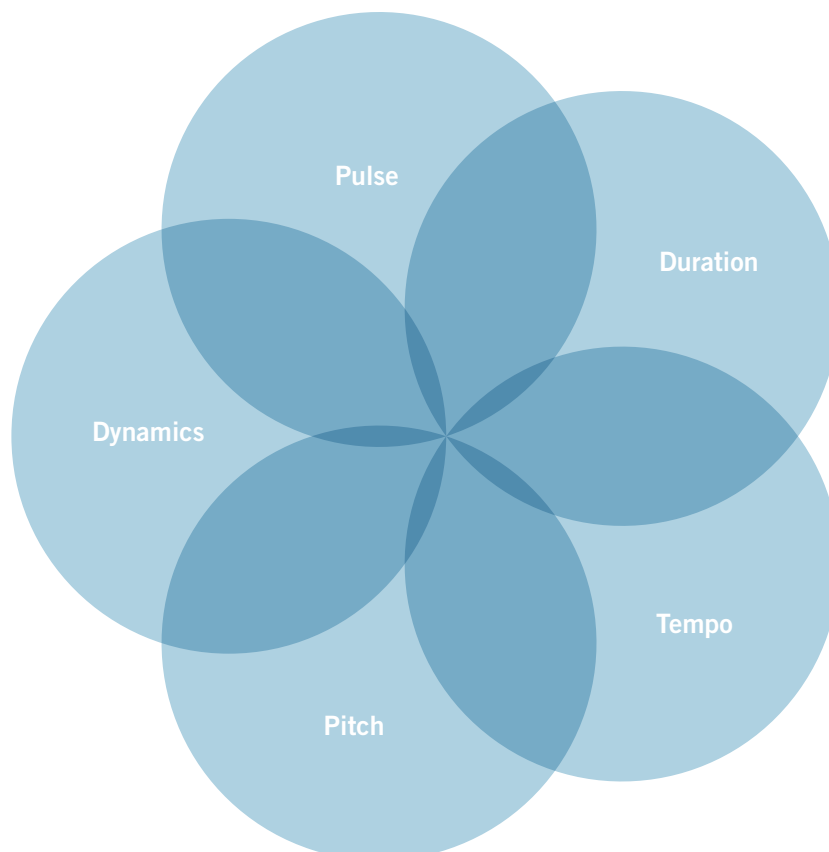
Planning for access to the music curriculum for students with mild general learning disabilities

Factors for consideration

What level is the student at on the continuum of musical skills being taught?	How should the material be organised and presented to meet the needs of the various learners?
In what particular areas will the student's learning disabilities hamper his/her progress?	How can each student be actively involved in the learning process?
What can the student share about his/her self-perceived disabilities during musical activities?	Is every student being encouraged to express him/herself creatively and confidently at his or her own individual level?
What listening and responding, performing, or composing skills are being developed in the student?	What differentiation strategies are required in order for each student to participate in planned musical activities?

Working on understanding musical elements to enable access for students with mild general learning disabilities

The following pages outline progression in the understanding of the musical elements. Areas where students with mild general learning disabilities may have difficulties are outlined and attendant teaching strategies suggested. For each musical element some activities are suggested. These activities can be expanded upon and differentiated to suit different class situations. Work on the understanding of these musical elements will equip the student with the skills he/she needs in order to appreciate music more fully. It will also provide the student with the skills to manipulate and use these elements in musical composition and performance.



Pulse

Musical element: pulse	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ show a steady pulse or beat ■ understand and differentiate between music with a steady pulse or beat and music without a strong beat ■ discover and recognise strong and weak beats ■ discover two beat time (for example, march), three beat time (for example, waltz), six, eight beat time (for example, jig). 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ clapping ■ focusing on listening experiences ■ motor skills—giving rise to difficulties in keeping time while moving to music ■ balance and co-ordination ■ number and counting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Model the clapping action clearly, stressing the position of the hands. Physically hold the students hands from the outside and clap with them initially to let them experience the required movement. ■ Choose music with a strong beat. Ensure that the listening environment is quiet and free from outside distractions. ■ Limit the variety of movements during movement activities. Students may need to spend a good deal of time mastering each movement. Enlist the help of classroom assistants in modelling the movements. ■ Count the beats clearly. Accentuate the beat with some physical action (for example, beating on a large drum, clapping in an exaggerated fashion, bouncing a coloured ball). Display numbers and point to them as the beat is being counted out by students and teacher.

 **Suggested activities for teaching pulse**

Give four students the numbers 1-4, using large numbers on an A4 card. Clap the beats 1-4 repeatedly with the class. Point to the relevant numbers on the cards as the beats are being clapped. Have students display their number card as the beat is being clapped, in order to give a visual representation of the progression of the beat. Perform this activity in time to a musical excerpt (using a lesser or greater number of beats as appropriate).

Divide the class by giving each student a number between 1 and 4. Explain that the '*ones*' clap on the first beat, the '*twos*' on the second, etc. Clap four beats repeatedly (each group clapping on their designated beat), counting them out, as a whole class activity. Instruct one group to keep silent on their count and clap the new rhythm sequence repeatedly. This promotes students' understanding of '*rests*' in rhythm sequences. It also emphasises the need to keep silent at times as part of musical performance. Repeat this activity, changing the '*silent beat*'.

Have students count to four (or a larger/smaller number) in their heads and perform pre-arranged action on number four. (It may be necessary to say the first number aloud to provide a common starting point.) Do this repeatedly to establish a pattern.

Place four percussion instruments on a table. Place students in a circle. The student at the starting point in the circle will be the first to pick up an instrument and play to the music. At a given signal he/she should pass this instrument on and play the next one. In this way the four instruments are gradually incorporated into the accompaniment and passed on so that every student gets an opportunity to play each instrument. Students without instruments at any given time should tap their feet or keep the beat with some other form of body percussion.

Use four percussion instruments and four students at a time. Practise playing each beat in sequence, counting 1,2,3,4. Decide which three beats are going to be soft in the sequence and which one is going to be played loudly (for example, **1**, 2, 3, 4). Have students repeat the sequence with a specific loud beat until given the signal to stop. Change the '*loud*' beat to another and repeat the activity. This activity gives the students the challenge of controlling sound levels, while laying the foundations for an understanding of syncopated rhythms.

Duration

Musical element: duration	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ listen to and imitate patterns of long and short sounds ■ listen to, imitate, and perform simple rhythm patterns which include silences ■ listen to, imitate, and perform patterns of long and short sounds and silences. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ focusing on task ■ short-term memory ■ confidence ■ auditory discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explain clearly to the student that the task is to listen, watch, and copy. Have students take turns imitating patterns. Establish eye contact. Perform exaggerated physical actions to go with the percussion or vocal sounds being produced (for example, wide movement of the hands while clapping, exaggerated movement of the mouth while enunciating sounds). ■ Start with single sounds and actions. Progress to short patterns performed slowly. Build on the students skills by extending these patterns and increasing the tempo. ■ Use familiar language (for example, students' names) as a basis for rhythm patterns. Repeat patterns often. This can be done for a few minutes each day. Record some patterns pictorially as a memory aid (for example, big trees for long beats, two small ones together for short beats). If a student seems uncomfortable with taking his/her turn individually, allow him/her to be part of a small group. Give him/her plenty of opportunities to listen to and watch other students performing the activity. Remark positively about any attempts he/she makes. ■ Use visual aids and gestures to highlight the differences between long and short sounds (for example, long and short lines on a chart, big and small pictures).

 **Suggested activities for teaching duration**

Use student names for work on rhythm patterns. Students identify, from narrow selection, the name being clapped (for example, *Mary/ti ti*, *Rebecca/ta ta ta*, *Ann/ta*).

Clap the language of weather each morning (*rain-y day*, *rainy, day*, *wind blow-ing*). This can be expanded upon by breaking the class into groups and having each one clap a different weather pattern in turn, or simultaneously.

Have students echo rhythm patterns sung/played by the teacher.

Use long sticks or batons to correspond to long notes, and short ones to correspond to short notes, to visually reinforce duration of notes played.

Have alternative students in a circle play *ta* and *ti ti* respectively, forming a steady rhythm pattern and giving them the experience of having a specific part to play in a performance.

Give a small group of students a percussion instrument each and have them play one beat each in sequence, keeping a steady rhythm and counting in their heads (for example, five students counting 1-5). Each student will have a designated number on which to sound his/her beat. Keep the rhythm going repeatedly until one participant misses his/her beat. That student must then remain silent while the others continue the repeated rhythm sequence. The sound of the sequence changes each time a student is 'out'. This activity can be differentiated by actively distracting students, thereby challenging their concentration levels. Initially, it may be necessary to count the beat out loud to get students used to the activity.

Use a pre-arranged gesture to indicate silence during rhythm patterns (e.g. a wide arm gesture, finger on the mouth).

Pitch

Musical element: pitch	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ understand and differentiate between high and low sounds ■ imitate melodies ■ perceive the contour (shape) of melodies ■ perceive the general shape of a short, simple melody represented on a staff ■ perceive movement within a melody by steps or by leaps. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ spatial awareness, left to right orientation ■ reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use actions and visual aids to accentuate movement of tune from high to low. When introducing the concept of high and low in relation to pitch, the teacher should start by using very high and very low vocal sounds so that there is a clearly discernible difference between high and low. Have the students imitate very high and very low vocal sounds. ■ The pentatonic scale (<i>d,r,m,s,l</i>) is useful here as it contains no half tone intervals. ■ Give the students many opportunities to follow written notation. Give them a copy of the music notation of songs or tunes, or pictorial representations of pitch sequences (for example, cars on the ground representing 'd', treetops representing 'm' and airplanes representing 's'). ■ Display a chart with notes and follow them with a pointer as tune is played or sung. Have students follow the tune with their fingers and discuss where the note sequence moves up or down, or where there is a leap or jump between notes. Relate the written notation to pictures (for example, sky above, ground below the staff), and to physical movement (for example, stretching up high or crouching low to represent high and low notes). ■ Use counters so that students can place them on the staff, and then hear or sing the corresponding notes.

 **Suggested activities for teaching pitch**

Sing a wrong note in a familiar tune and have students signal when this happens.

Students identify familiar tunes once the first few notes are heard.

Ask students to play a simple tune on pitched instruments and change a specific note, or a number of notes in their playing, noting the difference it makes to the tune.

Get students to stretch up high when high pitches are heard and crouch down for low pitches.

Have students move up and down with variation in melody.

Have students echo short musical phrases (vocally or instrumentally).

Get students to hum any note they like simultaneously as a group activity. Encourage them to listen to those around them and to alter their note accordingly.

Eventually everyone should arrive at, or close to, a similar pitch.

Sing a familiar song and have students keep silent on pre-arranged words in the song, developing the students' ability to hear sounds internally. A variation on this is to have students sing a song in their heads and only vocalise one or two pre-arranged words in the song. It is useful to sing the first word aloud in order to give everyone a common starting point, and to beat the rhythm for the students in order to keep them together. Another approach would be to play the melody while students are singing the song in their heads.

When teaching students to play a tune on pitched instruments teach each group a different line of the song initially, thereby quickly bringing about a complete performance of the tune that the students can listen to and learn from.

Decide on specific points on the body to correspond to notes on the scale. Sing/play the scale up and down while students place their hands on the relevant body parts (for example, d/feet, r/mid-calf, m/knees, f/waist, s/elbows, l/shoulders, t/chin, d'/top of head).

Students discuss how they can represent the scale using body positions in sequence (for example, eight students; d/lying on floor, r/curled in a ball, m/on hunkers, f/kneeling upright, s/sitting on a chair, l/standing, t/hands above head, d'/hands stretched up). Sing scale and point to relevant students as notes are sung.

Sing familiar songs for the students, stopping at strategic points and getting the students to fill in the gaps (for example, *'We're all going to the ___'*. Students say 'zoo' together or put up their hands if they know what the word is). As students develop their sense of pitch they can be encouraged to sing the missing word at the correct pitch.

Students imitate exactly the vocal sounds the teacher makes (for example, a high pitched siren, a very low deep voice, a rising or falling vowel sound). They can then make their own sounds and have other students imitate them.

Tempo

Musical element: tempo	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ understand and differentiate between fast and slow rhythmic and melodic patterns ■ understand getting faster, getting slower. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ motor skills, giving rise to difficulties in keeping time, varying speed of movement, keeping balance and co-ordination while moving to fast and slow music ■ spatial awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use visual aids, hand gestures, and body movements to accentuate fast, slow, getting faster, and getting slower (for example, bouncing a ball/waving a scarf/moving a puppet in time to the music). ■ Enlist the help of classroom assistants in modelling fast and slow movements. It may be necessary to physically help some students during movement to music activities. ■ Students with poor spatial awareness will need plenty of room to move, particularly while moving to 'fast' music.

Suggested activities for teaching tempo

Perform inappropriate actions to a tune and ask students to distinguish when this is happening (for example, moving very slowly to an Irish jig).

Encourage students to vary the speed of their movement to music in response to changes in tempo.

Use a glove puppet as a movement indicator. This can be done in silence, giving students the task of watching the movement indicator and varying their speeds of body movement as the puppet does.

Discuss musical pieces in different styles and highlight the reasons why the music is fast or slow, and how different tempos in music can elicit different moods (for example, march tune jubilant/rousing, lullaby calming/peaceful).

Dynamics

Musical element: dynamics	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ understand and differentiate between loud and soft sounds ■ understand getting louder, getting softer ■ select appropriate levels of loud and soft in performing. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ volume control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exaggerate loud and soft sounds initially. Ensure that the listening environment is free from distraction. ■ Discuss sounds in the environment and establish whether they are loud or soft. ■ Give students plenty of opportunities to imitate loud and soft sounds. ■ Draw attention to students' breathing while making loud and soft vocal sounds by having them place their hands on their lower rib cage (there will be a significant difference in the breathing action for a shout and for a gentle prolonged vocal sound).

Suggested activities for teaching dynamics

Encourage students to play louder or softer in response to hand gestures (for example, widening hands/arms signifies getting louder, narrowing them signifies getting softer).

Encourage students to perform normally noisy classroom tasks with as little sound as possible, and normally quiet ones with a greater degree of sound, giving them experience of how they can manipulate sound levels.

Vary the volume while playing a musical extract, and have students perform specific actions when the music is loud or soft.

Structure

Musical element: structure	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ understand start and stop ■ understand beginning, middle, and end ■ identify an obviously different or repeated section ■ identify a different or repeated section ■ respond with a sense of phrase (observe the natural divisions in music) ■ recognise simple form (for example, ABA where A represents the first section and B a second, contrasting section). 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ sequencing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stop and start movement as music stops and starts. ■ Use visual aids to highlight structure of musical extracts (for example, hold up a yellow card for <i>A</i>, red for <i>B</i>, and yellow again for <i>A</i>). ■ Vary physical movement to correspond to different sections in a piece. ■ Use a movement indicator (for example, a ball) and move it in different ways to accord with the structure of the piece. ■ Play the extract often and discuss other aspects of the tune, making the students very familiar with it before discussing structure. ■ Use a chart depicting the different sections of a tune or song in sequence (for example, a large blue circle, a red circle, and then a blue again for <i>ABA</i> structure). ■ Draw students' attention to the verse/chorus structure of songs. ■ Use rhythm patterns based on words or names and have students perform these in an <i>ABA</i> (or any other) structure (for example, <i>Ma-ry, Ma-ry, Tom, Tom, Ma-ry, Ma-ry</i>).

 **Suggested activities for teaching structure**

Encourage students to play or sing when a puppet or other movement indicator is moved, and stop when the movement is stopped. Changes in tempo can be prompted by changing the pace of the movement indicator.

Place small stuffed animals on a large piece of material (for example, an old sheet), and make them *'dance'* when the music is playing and stop when the music stops, enlisting the help of classroom assistants or students to hold and move the edges of the sheet. This activity can be extended by varying the movements of the animals to reflect different sections in a song or musical piece, for example roll them from side to side during the verse, and make them jump during the chorus.

Use rhythm patterns on *'rain-y day'* (ta ta ta), *'cold wind'* (ta-a ta), *'I need my coat'* (ta ti ti ta). Place pictures on a chart to correspond to each of these rhythms and have the relevant group perform their rhythm as their picture is pointed to. Give each pattern a number or a letter. Arrange these letters or numbers in varying sequences on a chart, and have the students perform the rhythm patterns in the given sequence.

Timbre

Musical element: timbre	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ play with and explore a variety of sound-making materials ■ classify sounds by the way they are produced ■ classify instruments by the way the sound is produced ■ differentiate between obviously different sounds and instruments ■ explore, classify and differentiate between different sounds and instruments ■ identify some families of instruments. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ attention span ■ playing/holding instruments and sound-making materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Colour code instruments that produce sounds in different ways, for example use a series of different coloured boxes for instruments that are shaken, tapped/beaten, bells/cymbals, pitched, blown, etc. The students can be involved in discussing which instruments go where, and why. ■ Display pictures of the different families of instruments. ■ Allow the students to hear, feel, and see a wide variety of instruments. Some websites facilitate listening experiences and will allow students to hear instruments that are not available in the classroom. ■ Allow students to hold and feel the instruments, and highlight, briefly and regularly, the various ways in which the sounds are made. ■ Include plenty of <i>'hands on'</i> experimentation with instruments and sound making materials. ■ Constant repetition may be necessary in order to give students the opportunity to develop their playing skills.

 **Suggested activities for teaching timbre**

Ask students to find a sound-maker in the classroom. The searching student can be blindfolded or the person making the sound can hide. A variation would involve individual students turning their backs and indicating the direction from which the sound is originating. This can be expanded upon by using a combination of sounds during the activity.

Have students identify sounds, or groups of sounds, made out of their range of vision.

Drop items into a tin, out of students' range of vision. They have to identify these objects from a narrow range of objects which they have previously witnessed and heard being dropped into the tin. This activity can be extended by dropping two items into the tin in quick succession.

Allow students to explore and discuss sounds in the school environment.

Tape familiar voices (for example, the school principal, familiar teachers, the school secretary) uttering the same phrase and have students match the voice to the relevant photograph.

Texture

Musical element: texture	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ listen and respond to sounds from one source and from more than one source ■ recognise differences between single sounds and combined sounds when listening ■ recognise single sounds and combined sounds visually (from graphic or standard notation) or when listening. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ recognition of a variety of instruments played simultaneously ■ visual discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include musical extracts where single instruments or small numbers of instruments are used. ■ Build slowly on students' ability to recognise instruments in solo performances in order to reach the stage where they can identify two or more instruments played together. ■ Include extracts from 'pop' music. Use videos (if available) showing musicians playing their instruments and discuss. ■ Display pictures of the instruments heard in musical extracts and draw students' attention to these before, during, and after listening experiences. ■ When working with instruments in the classroom, students can be asked to play only when their instrument colour is being displayed. In this way, as colours are added to the visual display, so too will sounds be added to the musical performance. What starts with a single instrument and single-colour display can be extended gradually, allowing the students to hear a number of different textures in the sound being produced. ■ When working with graphic, pictorial or standard notation, use tangible materials that are visually appealing (for example, coloured counters on a staff, where students can place the counters in different positions and hear the corresponding pitch combinations). ■ Expose the students to as many instruments as possible in the classroom. Allow them to feel and make sounds with the instruments (for example, drawing the bow across the fiddle, pressing notes on the accordion). Discuss the different ways in which the sound is produced.

 **Suggested activities for teaching texture**

Build a '*soundscape*' to match a picture (for example, busy street scene, farm).

Have groups within percussion groups stop playing when a picture of their instrument is held up, thereby varying the texture of the percussion accompaniment.

Colour code the instruments and '*build*' percussion as colours are added to a display (for example red/blue for drums/tambours; red/blue/green for drums/tambours/shakers).

Style

Musical element: style	
<p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ listen and respond to music of different styles ■ listen and respond to music in a wide range of styles ■ differentiate between clearly contrasting styles (for example, folk and flamenco guitar playing). 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ attention span. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use movement to music to highlight different styles (e.g simple folk dances, marching, 'disco dancing'). ■ Use pictures to correspond to different styles (e.g pictures of ballet dancers, people jiving, video of céilí dancing). ■ Tell simple stories about how different styles evolved (for example, negro songs, slaves singing in the cotton fields to cheer themselves up). Information and pictures can be downloaded from the internet. ■ Talk about the different styles of clothes that correspond with different musical styles (for example, Spanish flamenco dancers, marching bands).



Suggested activities for teaching style

Play two sharply contrasting pieces of music (for example, lullaby/march) in quick succession to highlight different musical styles.

Use movement to allow students to experience these differences in a kinaesthetic manner.

Devise activities involving matching pictures to different types of music (for example, baby sleeping/lullaby, soldiers marching/march tune, people jiving/rock and roll).

Using above pictures, have students play their instruments in an appropriate manner depending on which picture is indicated by you or a student *'leader'*.



Suggested activities combining the musical elements

Compose accompaniments for stories (for example, *'Jack and the Beanstalk'*—rising pitches for Jack climbing the beanstalk, loud rumbling sound for giant snoring).

Play *'Follow My Leader'* where one student performs a certain movement to music and the others copy this. Students can take turns to be the leader. A pre-arranged signal (e.g. drumbeat) can be used to stop all movement before class moves to copy the next student.

Use a large gong or timpani to develop students' ability to control movement and to play from the shoulder.

Compose sounds to accompany a cartoon or short film extract viewed with volume turned down.

Draw up a chart with headings related to musical elements (for example, fast/slow, loud/soft, happy/sad), and have the students help to place dots or markers under relevant headings, having listened to specific songs or musical extracts.

Use a mirror at times (if possible) to give students a greater understanding of their movements.

For younger students, make up songs about regular classroom activities and sing them with the students at appropriate times (for example, *'We're ready now, it's time for lunch, time for lunch, time for lunch. We're ready now, it's time for lunch and then we'll go and play' to the air of 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush'*).

Planning for differentiation

Particular issues in music

Music terminology

An understanding of the different musical concepts (elements) involved in listening and responding, performing, and composing should be fostered and developed in the students before the terminology relevant to these concepts is introduced. When students are familiar, through experience and discussion, with these concepts they will have something tangible to which musical terms such as pitch, tempo, timbre, style, structure, dynamics, duration, texture, pulse can be linked. Similarly, in the area of music literacy, students should have numerous experiences of early literacy activities such as graphic notation, rhythmic chants, and percussion work, before being introduced to note names or time values. Students with mild general learning difficulty may experience great difficulty understanding musical terminology, and will need a solid base of experience gained from working with musical elements before this terminology is introduced.

Materials

Teacher Guidelines, Music in the Primary School Curriculum gives an outline of the equipment needed to deliver the music curriculum effectively (p. 30). While the equipment needed for teaching students with mild learning disabilities is effectively the same, there are certain ways in which the selection of equipment and materials can be tailored and used to better suit the needs of these students.

Classroom materials

When teaching a song, it is recommended that the words and, on occasion, the music be displayed on a wall chart or screen. Students with mild general learning disabilities may have difficulties in the area of visual perception. Displays therefore should be clear and not too 'busy' or cluttered.

Students with visual impairments may need to be seated close to the display or to have an individual copy of the words or music. The starting point should be indicated by a mark or star.

Students with hearing impairment can benefit from the strategic use of speakers. The student can be encouraged to place his/her hand on the speakers and feel the vibrations as music is being played. Having separate or 'stand-alone' speakers can benefit the hearing-impaired student as these can be placed face down on a table or floor (if wooden) allowing the student to feel the musical vibrations throughout his/her body.

Instruments

Since auditory perception is a challenge for many students with mild general learning disabilities, it is especially important that the musical instruments used be of good quality and produce good, clearly discernible sound. The range of instruments offered at any stage of development should present possibilities for:

- creating sounds in different ways—shaking, tapping, blowing, scraping
- producing different dynamics—loud, quiet, etc.
- varying sound qualities—wooden and metal instruments, with a selection of beaters of varying hardness (hard, medium, soft), sticks, brushes in wood, plastic, metal, etc.
- exploring high and low sounds, including pitched instruments (xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars, keyboards etc.)
- making long and short sounds—ringing, echoing, reverberating, clipped, etc.

Selection and use of instruments

The following section outlines areas in which musical instruments can be adapted and modified to meet the needs of students with mild general learning disabilities.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Motor skills	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruments without beaters may be easier to use for example, hand-drums, shakers. ■ The tambourine and other such instruments provide bigger playing surfaces and will be more suitable initially. ■ Instruments can be attached to strings and held in close proximity to the student where he/she can rattle or move it in response to the music or rhythmic chant being worked on. ■ Beater handles can be adapted to make them larger and easier to grip. ■ Encourage students to progress from playing with one hand or beater (for example, on bongos) to using two hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some keyboards can be adapted to play a limited selection of pitches or one single pitch regardless of the keys pressed (for example, for drone or ostinato accompaniment). ■ For students with limited reach or strength, miniature keyboards with light action keys that do not require as much pressure to sound the notes may be more suitable. ■ When using xylophones, glockenspiels, or chime bars, students will benefit from the challenge of hitting relevant notes at appropriate times during musical performances and experimentation.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Ability to grip	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shakers can be acquired in various sizes and shapes to suit individual students. ■ Bells attached to wrists or feet may be more suitable for students with disabilities in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keyboards and other instruments, which are free standing, will be more appropriate here. ■ When using glockenspiels and xylophones, grips on the beaters may need to be adapted (for example, wrap strips of foam around the grip to make it larger).

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Visual discrimination	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use brightly coloured instruments. It may be useful to colour code the different categories in the percussion range. ■ Colourful ribbons can be attached to instruments making their use more visually stimulating. ■ Transparent percussion instruments, where students can see the contents moving (for example, large transparent rainmaker tube with colourful contents), will prompt students to focus on the visual as well as aural elements of performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When using keyboards, cover portions of the keyboard not being used or mark keys to be played with coloured stickers. ■ Students can perform a drone or ostinato accompaniment using a small number of clearly marked notes. ■ Chime bars and hand bells often have different colours for the various notes, and this is particularly useful in linking visual and auditory discrimination skills.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Auditory discrimination	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extra work may be required on the identification of sounds made by the various instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Electronic keyboards have a variety of inbuilt sounds and rhythms useful in the development of auditory discrimination. ■ Computer technology can be used to obtain a visual representation on screen of music or compositions being worked on. ■ Xylophones and glockenspiels give students a visual representation of pitch relationships and musical intervals.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Spatial awareness	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give students plenty of individual space in which to use the instruments to avoid unintentionally banging their instrument into the students next to them. ■ The movements involved in playing instruments, or in movement to music sessions, can be visually accentuated by attaching colourful scarves or ribbons to instruments or body parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of the piano keyboard develops left to right orientation and spatial awareness as well as an awareness of musical intervals and the relationship between pitches. ■ Glockenspiels and xylophones also give a visual representation of the left to right orientation of the scale, and of the size of intervals between pitches.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Limited strength	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use instruments where sound is achieved easily with little strength required (for example, egg shakers). ■ Instruments should be light enough for students to hold independently. ■ Students with weak wrist strength may benefit from short sessions using beaters. ■ Give students plenty of opportunities to rest between activities, or to change activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Electronic keyboards with light action keys, where little pressure is required to achieve sound, will be easier for these students to play. ■ Students' ability to handle the instruments and control their sounds will form the criteria for instrument selection here.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Physical disability	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attach instruments to a chair or a stand for easier accessibility. ■ Shakers can be attached to feet, wrists, or other parts of the body as appropriate. ■ Suspend instruments (for example, wind chimes) on a stand within range of the pupil. ■ Use large or padded grips or beaters. ■ Students with physical disability may need extra time for resting between activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keyboards are available in different sizes. Smaller ones, for example two octave keyboards which can be transposed, can fit easily across wheelchairs. ■ The use of computer technology, music software, and a wide variety of input devices can lead to achievements in areas of composition and performance that would otherwise be unavailable to students with physical disabilities.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	
Limited attention span	
+ Percussion instruments	+ Pitched instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make music sessions visually stimulating through the use of colourful instruments, transparent instruments, colourful scarves and ribbons, puppets as movement indicators, finger cymbals with faces painted on, etc. ■ Change activities often and make the music session as stimulating as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chime bars and hand bells shared out among a group of students will limit the students' task in playing to the sounding of a single note at appropriate times, while allowing them to be part of a tuneful performance. Use exaggerated physical movements to indicate to the student that it is his/her turn to play during a tune or pitch sequence (for example, point to student and establish eye contact).

 **Points to note**
Tin whistles/recorders

- Some students with mild general learning disabilities may have difficulty reproducing models of musical patterns they have heard. The degree of co-ordination needed to blow these instruments in order to produce a clear sound, while at the same time removing fingers from note-holes in order to play a tune (i.e. reproduce a given pattern of notes), can be very challenging for many students with mild general learning disabilities.
- It is important to assess the student's likely aptitude for the task of playing the tin whistle/ recorder before embarking on work in this area. Generally, if a student shows a good degree of capability in other musical areas (for example, singing in pitch, breathing correctly while singing, playing simple tuned instruments, echoing rhythm and melodic sequences) he/she may be ready to progress to a wind instrument.
- Students who are not ready for the above can use a kazoo as an accompaniment to work with students on tuned wind instruments. In this way they are getting used to the concept of making music using their mouth and breathing.

Stringed instruments

- Students with mild general learning disabilities may have more difficulty playing stringed instruments since the visual representation of movement up and down the scale is not as clearly defined as it is on the piano keyboard, glockenspiel, or xylophone.
- Considerable dexterity and co-ordination is required to carry out the reciprocal actions with the right and left hand while playing. It is important, however, to allow students to experience these instruments and hear the distinctive sounds they make.
- Live performances involving stringed instruments where students are allowed to see, hear, and feel the instruments are important in expanding their knowledge of musical instruments. If possible, some stringed instruments should be brought into the classroom so that students can be involved in discussing the physical aspects and sound-making qualities of these instruments. Students should be encouraged, where possible, to experiment and make sounds with the instruments.

Home-made percussion instruments

- The students should be involved in making a variety of home-made percussion instruments during their time in school. There is ample opportunity here for integration with visual arts.
- From the myriad of sound sources around them, students should develop an awareness of how percussion instruments can be used to represent these sounds. Individual needs and preferences can be facilitated in the making of percussion instruments.
- Instruments should be made from a variety of materials, which students should be encouraged to name, feel, and discuss.
- Visual discrimination can be developed by using a variety of bright interesting colours, and by discussing the various shapes and sizes of the instruments.
- Instruments can be coloured coded according to the sound they make, thus combining visual and auditory discrimination in the instrument-making process.
- While making and using home-made percussion instruments is a valuable activity, these instruments should not be used as a replacement for manufactured instruments, as the latter are an essential part of students' work in the music curriculum.

Note: There is a comprehensive list of instruments suitable for primary schools on page 130 of the Teacher Guidelines for the mainstream curriculum.

Approaches and methodologies

It is recommended that lessons be delivered to students with mild general learning disabilities in a multi-sensory manner. Pictures, sounds, and physically tangible materials appropriate to the song or piece of music being worked on can be an invaluable aid to comprehension.

Multi-sensory approaches

The following are just some suggestions that merit serious consideration:

- Visual displays can be made interesting and sufficiently clear to the students by using colour, flipcharts, felt boards, and magnetic boards for musical notation, balloons/moving puppets as signals to start/stop playing, overhead screens attached to computer, and larger print/pictures for students with visual impairment.
- The teacher can ensure that music and sounds heard are of good quality by using good quality instruments and recording/playing equipment, and by being aware that the student with hearing impairment can feel vibrations.
- Musical activities can be enhanced by tactile experiences by using an ice cube to reinforce idea of *'cold'* sounds in composition or a soft cuddly spider for role play in *'Little Miss Muffet'*, and by encouraging students to identify musical instruments by touch.
- Taste or smell can be used as an aid to understanding by encouraging students to smell/taste buns when learning *'Five Currant Buns'*, or to smell flowers during a lesson with a garden theme (for example, *'In an English Country Garden'*).
- Movement and dance can be used to enhance the music programme by encouraging students to stretch up high for high pitched notes, to use body percussion when marching or waltzing, and to move quickly or slowly with musical tempo.

Lesson planning

Consideration of the following points enables the teacher to tailor the music lesson to the varying needs of the students:

- An interesting introduction to the lesson is important in order to motivate the students and focus them as a group on the lesson to follow.
- The teacher should be ready to break down a task into more manageable units.
- What is being taught should be made clear by a variety of means (for example, body language and gestures, writing/drawing on the board, demonstrating on an instrument, putting words/music/pictures on paper or on a recording), thus making the lesson as multi-dimensional as possible.
- It is important to give students something to focus on during listening experiences. The focus can then be varied during subsequent listening tasks (for example, *'Can you hear drums in the music?' 'Listen for a boy's name in the song', 'Is the music fast or slow?' 'Name one instrument in the piece'*).
- Give the students some descriptive language to describe music they are about to hear, and encourage them to add to this after the listening experience.
- Make the lesson as multi-sensory as possible (for example, if there are flowers in the song bring some in for the students to feel and smell, if the song mentions food have the students smell/taste this food as an introduction).
- If possible, relate a song being learned or music being played to something in the students' realm of experience.
- When discussing the place of origin of a song or of a piece of music, it may be effective to relate the length of the journey to this country to the length of a journey the students have made (for example, much further than Dublin).
- Work in other subjects on the countries of origin of various songs and music will help to make the music more meaningful for the students.
- When discussing the age or date of a piece of music, students may find it easier to relate it to the age of someone they are familiar with (for example, older than your granny!).
- Change activities often during a music lesson in order to avoid a situation where students with a short attention span lose interest.
- Be firm in transition from one activity to the next.
- Frequent shorter lessons are often more effective than more isolated longer lessons.
- Closed questions are effective with students who may have difficulty understanding concepts in music. These can be gradually replaced by more open questions as the students' understanding develops (for example *'Is the music/sound loud?' 'Is the music/sound loud or soft?' 'Describe the music/sound'*).
- In compositional activities, it is useful to give the students narrow boundaries within which to work, as this focuses them and can result in more divergent thinking on their part (for example, a limited supply of percussion instruments to choose from).
- Use simple adjectives that are familiar to the students initially, since students with mild general learning disabilities may have difficulty linking sound with imagery.
- Get students to use hand gestures to reflect pitch changes in songs and musical extracts. This will help them towards a greater understanding of pitch differences.

Teaching and learning in the key areas of content

The following table outlines, in brief, the content of the music curriculum in the *Primary School Curriculum* (and should follow the continuum outlined in the music curriculum). Potential difficulties for students with mild general learning disabilities are highlighted and some relevant teaching strategies provided (in addition to those outlined previously).

Note: There are many cross-curricular benefits for students associated with work in the music curriculum, and some of these are emphasised.

Strand content: listening and responding	
<p>Exploring sounds ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS</p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ listen to, identify, and imitate familiar sounds in the immediate environment from varying sources ■ listen to, identify, and describe sounds in the environment with increasing awareness ■ listen to and describe a widening variety of sounds from an increasing range of sources ■ classify and describe sounds within a narrow range (for example, alarms, bird calls) ■ recognise and demonstrate pitch differences ■ listen to sounds in the environment with an increased understanding of how sounds are produced and organised. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<p><i>The student may experience difficulty in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ recognition of sounds ■ categorisation of sounds into sound families ■ classification of how sounds are made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use uncluttered soundscapes (for example, listening environments with a small number of sounds, tapes with significant silences between sounds, a quiet outside area as opposed to a busy place where there are many sounds together). ■ Use single words, and work on sound lotto games (for example make sound lotto games based on sounds that students hear often in their daily environment). ■ Give students experience of a wide variety of sounds in real life. ■ Categorise sounds familiar to the students (for example, sounds in school, sounds at home, town sounds, kitchen sounds). ■ Record these sounds and discuss them. ■ Relate sounds to pictures. ■ Make the sounds with the students in the classroom (for example, allow them to make the sounds, and discuss in detail how the sounds are made). ■ Emphasise and demonstrate repeatedly how different sounds are produced.

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Environmental sounds**

- Understanding and relating to the environment is an ongoing life skill for all students. Teaching students how to identify and classify the sounds they hear on a daily basis develops their awareness of the world in which they live.
- Equipping the students with the skills to interpret and respond to sounds is an important foundation for further work on the music curriculum.
- Listening and responding to sounds develops students' auditory discrimination, which is important for language and communication.
- Sounds are an integral element of everyday life, and the ability to discriminate between sounds and to identify these sounds is an important life skill.

Strand content: listening and responding

Exploring sounds

VOCAL SOUNDS

The student should be enabled to:

- recognise the difference between the speaking voice and the singing voice, and use these voices in different ways
- recognise different voices
- use sound words and word phrases to describe and imitate selected sounds
- identify pitch differences in different voices
- explore the natural speech rhythm of familiar words
- discover the different kinds of sounds that the singing voice and the speaking voice can make
- imitate patterns of long and short sounds vocally (for example, boomchicka, boomchicka, rockachicka, boom)
- explore a range of sounds that the singing voice and the speaking voice can make
- distinguish and describe vocal ranges and tone colours heard in a piece of music.

▲ Potential area of difficulty

The student may experience difficulty in relation to:

- self confidence
- imitating vocal sounds
- auditory discrimination
- imitating patterns of sound
- controlling volume.

+ Possible strategies

- Use small mixed ability groups working together.
- Allow students to experience, watch, and listen to others performing a task. Eventually they may become comfortable enough to perform the task independently.
- Use photos of familiar people and tapes of their voices.
- Students should not be requested to make sounds individually until they are confident enough to do so.
- Make vocal sounds interesting and exaggerated (squeaky, very low).
- Use language that is familiar to students, challenging them gradually with new sounds.
- See *'Understanding musical elements: pitch'* (p.19-20).
- Use familiar language and build upon it for rhythm patterns.
- Focus attention by establishing eye contact and explaining clearly that the child has to watch, listen, and imitate.
- Draw attention to how sound is produced. Do exercises involving loud and soft vocal sounds. Draw attention to breathing exercises and posture.



Cross-curricular benefits

Vocal sounds

- Work in this area develops confidence, and awareness of how the voice can be used.
- Students' vocal skills, pronunciation, voice projection, volume control and pitch control, all of which are important for language and communication, can be developed in the *Listening and responding* strand.
- Work on vocal rhythm patterns and the breaking of words into syllables can be very helpful in the development of phonological awareness and reading skills.
- Students with poor reading skills will find themselves successfully breaking words into syllables without being hampered by feelings of inadequacy, and this may develop skills, interest, and confidence in the area of reading.

Strand content: listening and responding

Exploring sounds
BODY PERCUSSION

The student should be enabled to:

- make sounds with his/her body
- discover different ways in which rhythm patterns and accompaniments can be performed using different parts of the body
- perform body percussion in pairs and small groups.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<p><i>The student may experience difficulty in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ knowing and naming body parts ■ co-ordination ■ crossing the mid-line ■ physical disability ■ spatial awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mention the names of body parts often as students are exploring the ways in which they can make sounds with their bodies. ■ Start with simple movements. Students who have difficulty combining a sequence of movements to produce a rhythm pattern could be given a single sound to make at strategic points during the performance (for example, tap their shoulder to signal a change in pace or a change to a different movement). ■ Introduce simple movements using one side of the body to make sounds on the other. This might initially involve single sounds, progressing to one movement across the line during a simple rhythm sequence. Students can be progressively challenged, depending on their individual abilities in this area. ■ Encourage students to explore how they can make sounds to suit their range of movement. When working in pairs, it may suit to have another student make sounds with the physically disabled student (for example, clap hands, tap on shoulder). ■ Start with simple movements and single sounds. It may be necessary to position the student's hand quite close to where the sound is going to be made in readiness to make the sound on a given signal (for example, hand in position in front of chest). Give students one sound to make throughout a group performance. As they gain ability, this can be increased to sequences of two or more sounds/ movements.

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Body percussion**

- Work in this area develops students' awareness of their bodies. For young students, it can be combined with work on naming body parts.
- Students who have difficulties with motor skills and co-ordination will benefit from the challenge of making sounds and performing rhythm patterns using body percussion.
- Exercises can be devised requiring students to cross the mid-line in their use of body percussion (for example, tapping left knee with right hand, clicking fingers of right hand to left of body).
- Figure-ground perception is developed as students gain the ability to recognise that the sound is being made by some part of the body hitting against the other, and they must judge the degree of force needed to make the sound or to vary the volume. Students will need to think about how they are using their bodies and will gain confidence in their ability to control body movements in a structured manner.
- Work on body percussion will help to develop spatial awareness.
- Sessions on body percussion can be enjoyable and motivational for students. In some cases, students who may otherwise lack the confidence to work in groups may find themselves doing so willingly in order to be part of the class performance.

Strand content: listening and responding

Exploring sounds
INSTRUMENTS

The student should be enabled to:

- explore ways of making sounds using manufactured and home-made instruments
- experiment with a variety of techniques using manufactured and home-made instruments
- explore how the sounds of different instruments can suggest various sounds and sound pictures (for example, coconut halves/horses hooves).

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<p><i>The student may experience difficulty in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ relating sounds heard to visual images ■ auditory discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ See ‘<i>Selection and use of instruments</i>’(pages 32-35). ■ Use pictures regularly. Give students the task of matching sounds to visual images (e.g. pictures of the sun, a windblown tree and rain/sound of fingernails tapping quickly on desk: which picture does the sound match?). ■ Draw attention to the ways different instruments can suggest sound pictures (for example, coconut halves/horses hooves, drums/thunder). Devise matching activities around this (for example, a picture of Santa’s sleigh/wrist bells). ■ Give the students as much live experience of a wide variety of instruments as possible. Seeing and hearing the instruments ‘<i>live</i>’ gives students something tangible with which to relate to instrument sounds. ■ Use the computer to download images of instruments and to allow the students to hear the sounds made by these instruments (thereby combining visual and aural). ■ Challenge students to identify instruments played out of their line of vision. ■ Start with narrow choices and simple tasks (for example, show the students a drum and let them hear the sound, play this drum out of their range of vision, and then ask them what it is). ■ Work with an increasingly wider variety of instruments, and regularly discuss sounds made with a view to increasing students’ vocabulary and ability to describe and discriminate between the sounds made. ■ Give the students something visual to relate to as the pitch moves from high to low, etc.



Cross-curricular benefits

Instruments

- Discussion of the sounds made will help to develop the students' vocabulary while also giving them the descriptive language to identify the characteristics of these sounds.
- Instruments are motivational in the development of motor skills and co-ordination.
- Students' skills of auditory discrimination will be developed through on-going work with instruments.

Strand content: listening and responding

Exploring sounds

LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO MUSIC

Note: Work on understanding, responding to, and working with the musical elements is interwoven throughout this strand. (See ‘*Understanding musical elements*’, p.14-30).

The student should be enabled to:

- listen to musical extracts across an increasingly broad and varied range
- develop the skills to critically appraise the music by being conscious of the musical elements involved
- develop the skills of combining the musical elements effectively in composition
- move to music as a response to listening experiences
- talk about musical extracts
- respond imaginatively through language, movement, art, or drama
- respond to their own compositions and those of others.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<p><i>The student may experience difficulty in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ language ■ co-ordination ■ physical disability ■ self-confidence ■ focusing on task/listening experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use closed questions, or questions giving a narrow range of options, and simple language. Speak slowly and clearly in discussion. Use physical gestures and vocal tone to help get the meaning across. ■ Some students may express their response to music more capably through art, movement, or drama, and these responses should be encouraged. ■ Make movements simple. Tailor the movement to the abilities of the student. Gradually build on the ‘<i>store</i>’ of movements that the student can perform comfortably. ■ Students with physical disabilities should be involved in movement sessions and encouraged to move in their own individual way. Classroom assistants or classmates can pair with students with limited mobility during movement sessions. ■ Give students an extra dimension to their movement, which will take the focus off the idea of performing movements in front of others. Asking students to bounce a ball, or wave a coloured scarf (with others) in time to the music may help them to move in a less self-conscious manner. ■ Give students something to focus on during listening experiences (for example, listen for the piano solo, listen for happy/sad language, identify a drum in the music and listen to it, etc.).

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Listening and responding to music**

- Discussion and responding to songs and musical extracts provide many opportunities for language development.
- For students who find it difficult to express themselves using language, music and movement, provide another means of expression that will contribute to their physical and emotional development.
- Providing students with opportunities to respond to their own compositions and those of others helps them develop the important skill of giving and responding to constructive appraisal in a healthy, supportive atmosphere.
- The process of having their compositions discussed and appreciated will help develop the confidence of students who suffer from low self-esteem.
- Working on class compositions (for example, collectively producing sound effects to illustrate a stormy night) will give students opportunities to work collaboratively with others.
- Working on class compositions (e.g. collectively producing sound effects to illustrate a stormy night) will give students the opportunity to work together and to develop their social skills.

Strand content: performing**Song singing**

The student should be enabled to:

- develop the ability to use song as a means of expression
- recognise and sing familiar songs
- develop a wide repertoire of songs
- develop an understanding of musical elements through work on songs and song singing
- develop his/her individual vocal range to its full potential
- sing with increasing confidence and vocal control (see *Teacher Guidelines, Music*, page 88 for strategies that can enable students to overcome singing difficulties).
- develop the ability to be involved in part singing and harmonising.

▲ Potential area of difficulty

The student may experience difficulty in relation to:

- reading
- short-term memory
- language
- volume control
- pitch control
- auditory discrimination
- pronunciation
- singing in parts.

+ Possible strategies

- Teach the song aurally. The students repeat the words of each line after hearing the teacher say them, and then sing them after the teacher sings them or after hearing them on a tape.
- The students learn songs by rote.
- Point to pictures relating the story of the song as a visual memory aid while students are singing.
- Display the words of songs on charts on the walls of the classroom.
- Relate songs to something familiar to the students.
- Adapt the lyrics of some songs to suit the language level of the students.
- Compose, or help students to compose, short 'songs' to do with everyday events (for example, 'Put on your coat it's time to play, it's time to play, it's time to play, Put on your coat it's time to play and we will have such fun'—to the tune of 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush').
- Put the language of songs into contexts that are familiar to the students.
- Use the language of songs in a number of contexts (for example, cross-curricular work on 'Molly Malone' involving discussion of Moore Street and fishmongers, and involving students in artwork on a market theme).
- Draw students' attention to their posture and breathing while making loud and soft vocal sounds.
- Ask them to place their hands on their lower rib cage and feel how it moves as they make sounds of different volumes.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have them feel the vibrations in their neck as they make loud and soft sounds. ■ Have them make very loud and very soft sounds initially to highlight the differences between them, and gradually introduce sounds with more volume. ■ Use similar strategies to those given for volume control (above) when working with pitch. Give students plenty of opportunities to listen to short pitch sequences. ■ Have students move their head, eyes, or other parts of their bodies upwards with rising pitches and downwards with falling ones. (See <i>'Understanding musical elements'</i> (p.14-30) for additional strategies.) ■ Devise short vocal patterns for the students to work with, for example in percussion and rhythm work. Base these on phonic sounds that are used in the lyrics of the song to be learned (for example, for the 'r' sound—'<i>ra ra riri ra, ra roo roo ra</i>'). ■ Echo singing and call and response (for example, one group singing a question and the other answering) can be used to give students experience of singing in different groups before they partake in activities in which two groups are singing simultaneously. ■ Having one group, or an individual, accompany another group with a drone accompaniment (staying on one note) is a good introduction to part singing. ■ Face groups singing different parts away from each other initially as this will help them to focus on their own part. ■ Have classroom assistants sing with and <i>'conduct'</i> each group to help them focus on their part.



Cross-curricular benefits

Song singing

- Song singing is a valuable means of expression for the students.
- Discussion of songs can be used as a vehicle for language development.
- Songs lend themselves easily to cross-curricular integration (for example, work on number, movement, art, SESE).
- Students with language and communication difficulties may find it easier to use language in song than in the spoken form.
- Performing songs together and achieving a sound of which the group can be proud will develop students' self-esteem.
- The ultimate aim of teaching singing is to bring students to a stage where they can express themselves through song with enjoyment and confidence. This can be an important life skill, which will help students to integrate socially in school and in the wider community.

Strand content: performing

Literacy

(See ‘*Understanding musical elements*’ (p.14-30) for strategies in the development of skills in rhythm and pitch)

The student should be enabled to:

- identify pictures which ‘*match*’ songs (for example, choosing a picture of a star in response to ‘*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*’)
- draw pictures to represent an idea in a song or musical extract
- recognise and perform simple patterns from pictorial symbols
- identify and perform simple rhythm patterns from memory and from notation
- identify and define the rhythm patterns of well-known songs and chants
- recognise and use some standard symbols to notate metre (time) and rhythm
- recognise longer and more complex patterns of familiar songs and chants
- recognise the shape (contour) of a simple melody
- recognise and sing familiar tunes and singing games within a range of two or three notes
- recognise and sing simple tunes from simplified notation, combining rhythm and pitch
- recognise and sing simple tunes in a variety of ways
- recognise the shape of melodies on a graphic score or in standard notation
- use standard symbols to identify and sing a limited range of notes and melodic patterns
- use standard symbols to notate rhythm and pitch
- discover how pentatonic tunes can be read, sung, and played in *G doh*, *C doh*, or *F doh*
- recognise and sing familiar tunes in a variety of ways
- recognise the shape of a melody and movement by steps or leaps from a graphic score or from notation
- use standard notation to read, sing, and play simple melodies from sight.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<p><i>The student may experience difficulty in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ reading music from notation ■ visual discrimination ■ number and counting ■ auditory discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give the students many opportunities to follow written notation (for example, give them copies of the musical notation of songs or tunes.) ■ Devise pictorial representations of pitch sequences (for example, cars on the ground representing <i>d</i>, treetops representing <i>m</i>, and airplanes representing <i>s</i>). ■ Display a chart with the notes and follow them with a pointer as tune is played or sung. Have students discuss where the note sequence moves up or down, or where there is a leap or jump between notes. ■ Relate the written notation to physical movement (for example, stretching up high or crouching low to represent high and low notes). ■ Use simple and clear pictures and symbols.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use concrete materials that students can feel and move (for example, counters on a stave, circles with velcro to be placed on a stave on a wall chart). ■ Use a small ladder (or a stairs) held by classroom assistants or reliable students, and mark each step clearly as a note on the scale. Play the relevant notes as the student moves up and down the ladder. ■ Count the beats clearly. Accentuate the beat with some physical action (for example, beating on a large drum, clapping in an exaggerated fashion, bouncing a coloured ball). ■ Display numbers and point to them as beat is being counted. ■ As far as possible, activities in rhythm and pitch notation should be adapted so that they involve physical movement, visual images and concrete materials. ■ Make use of ICT to enable the student to see a visual representation of pitch progression as the music is being played. ■ Computer software is available that highlights the notes on screen as they are being played, and/or allows the student to manipulate the pitch sequence visually represented on screen and to hear the result.

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Literacy**

Note: It is important to ensure that students are not challenged in the area of standard notation before they are ready.

- *'A vast range of experience throughout the curriculum can be enjoyed by students without reference to music reading and writing'. (Teacher Guidelines, Music, p. 89.)*
- There is a large amount of interesting and enjoyable work within the music curriculum along the continuum of skills in rhythm and graphic notation, which can be delivered in a conquerable and undaunting way to students, thus preserving their confidence and allowing them to experience success.
- Activities in which students are involved in counting out beats are an enjoyable and effective way of developing their counting skills.
- Work on pictorial and graphic notation develops visual discrimination, spatial awareness and left to right orientation.
- Computer skills, which the student can use in other curricular areas, can be developed in an enjoyable and motivational manner.

Strand content: performing	
<p>Playing instruments</p> <p>(See ‘<i>Selection and use of instruments</i>’, p. 32-35.)</p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ develop the skills to play home-made and manufactured percussion instruments ■ experiment with and explore these instruments ■ use these instruments to accompany musical pieces with an increasing consciousness of the musical elements ■ develop a range of different playing techniques ■ play simple two and three note tunes on pitched instruments ■ gradually increase the range of these ■ play tunes from memory ■ work with graphic/pictorial notation with increasing confidence ■ work with standard notation ■ reach individual levels of proficiency in the playing of instruments ■ participate in group performances. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
(See <i>Selection, adaptation and use of instruments</i> for strategies in this area, p.32-35.)	(See <i>Selection, adaptation and use of instruments</i> for strategies in this area, p.32-35.)

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Playing instruments**

- Co-ordination, motor skills, and physical dexterity are developed through playing instruments.
- Musical instruments provide students with another medium of expression. This can be particularly helpful for students who have difficulty expressing themselves in other ways.
- The ability to play an instrument in a social situation will allow the student to contribute to the enjoyment of others, and develop his/her confidence and self-esteem.
- Being part of a group performance where the student's contribution is valued, will develop his/her ability to work collaboratively.
- Work on the musical instruments of other cultures will develop the student's sense of the wider world.
- The levels of pride, achievement, and enjoyment that can be gained through group performances, where students have practised and worked hard together to create the end result, cannot be overemphasised, particularly for students who find it difficult to succeed in other areas.

Note: Work on the strands outlined, provides students with an understanding of how musical elements are used in musical compositions, and how they can be manipulated to convey emotions or sound pictures. This understanding equips them with skills for work on the composing strand.

Strand content: composing

Improvising and creating

The student should be enabled to:


- arrange sounds and musical pitches in a manner that produces something appealing and meaningful
- incorporate musical elements in compositions (for example, getting gradually louder to illustrate waking up in the morning, soft to portray sadness, fast to convey happy feelings, syncopated rhythms to illustrate frenetic activity)
- select sounds from a variety of sound sources to create simple sound ideas, individually and in groups
- create simple melodic answers to melodic questions
- create sequences of sound ideas to illustrate a story or event
- create rhythmic patterns using voices, body percussion, and instruments
- compose melodies incorporating changes in dynamics, etc. to convey meaning behind the music.

▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lacking confidence/fear of failure ■ relating sound to images. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give students simple compositional tasks often, allowing them to succeed (for example, at breakfast time: the sound of dishes, toast popping up, kettle whistling, etc.). ■ Revisit and expand these compositions. ■ Give students a narrow range from which to choose, for example, a big drum or a small one for thunder sound). ■ Use closed questions initially in group discussion (Do you think the egg shaker makes a sound like thunder?). ■ Praise students' compositions. Convey to the students that, as composition is individual to each student, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' judgements. Each composition is valid in its own right. ■ Encourage students to talk about why they think various strategies should be used in group compositions (for example, changes in dynamics). ■ Provide simpler examples for these students for a longer period of time (for example, crashing cymbals to illustrate someone falling over, coconut halves to convey the sound of a horse trotting).

 **Cross-curricular benefits****Improvising and creating**

- Experiences in the area of composition develop the students' creativity and powers of individual expression.
- Students are made aware of the versatility of music as a form of expression.
- Appreciation of the work of each student develops confidence and self-esteem, which will help them in other areas of the curriculum.
- Composing requires students to think about the relationship between music and emotions, stories or events, and the ways in which musical elements can be manipulated to convey meaning. This process develops their powers of reasoning.
- Students are required to work collaboratively on group compositions, thus developing their social skills.

Strand content: composing	
<p>Talking about and recording compositions</p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ discuss his/her compositions and those of others in a constructive manner ■ record compositions in a variety of ways. 	
▲ Potential area of difficulty	+ Possible strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ self-confidence ■ language and communication ■ recording compositions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Validate each student's contribution with a positive response. ■ Allow students with language difficulties to demonstrate their ideas in response to prompts or questions (for example, <i>'Let us hear your idea for the train sound'</i>, <i>'Would you use the drum or the tambourine for the soldiers marching?'</i>). ■ Graphic, pictorial, and possibly standard notation can be used (depending on the student's level of ability in this area). ■ Work can also be recorded using ICT and tape recording equipment. ■ The recording of a student's part in a composition can be as simple as the drawing of a tree swaying to illustrate a <i>'whoosh'</i> sound. The important thing is that the student should understand what he/she is recording and how he/she is recording it, in order to be able to revisit it later for further work and discussion.

<p> Cross-curricular benefits</p> <p>Talking about and recording compositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discussion of compositions involves the exchange of ideas and develops the skill of expressing ideas and reacting to the opinions of others. ■ In discussing compositions, students' powers of constructive criticism can be developed. ■ Recording their compositions gives the students concrete evidence of progress in this area. A collection of their work can be kept in portfolio form to give them a sense of progression and achievement.
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Exemplars

Exemplars in each of the strands:

- Listening and responding
 - Performing and composing
- are outlined at three levels: junior, middle and senior.

They demonstrate how students with mild general learning disabilities can access the music curriculum. Work on these exemplars can be spread out over a number of music sessions as appropriate. Strands in the music curriculum are significantly inter-related and lessons often include elements of all three strands.

Exemplar 1: **Music****Strand:** Listening and responding**Strand unit:** Exploring sounds**Level:** Junior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to and differentiate between two given sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beater, drum, chime bar story and picture. 	<p>The students should be enabled to name the three items concerned (drum, beater, and chime bar) or, alternatively, point to the appropriate one when asked. The language of sound can be developed by asking the students if they feel the sounds made are loud/soft, and asking them to think of other things to say about the sounds. Foundations can be laid for the relation of sound to everyday life by encouraging the students to think of times when they have heard similar sounds. (for example, <i>'What are they like?'</i> <i>'Did you ever hear that sound before?'</i> <i>'Where?'</i>).</p>

Methodology**Introduction**

- Show the students the instruments and mention their names as you talk about them.
- Invent a short, age-appropriate story around one or both of the instruments. For example, John's big sister brought him to the shop to get a present for his birthday. There were lots of toys in the shop. While looking at the toys John heard a noise coming from around a corner. He looked to see what it was and saw a little girl called Sarah playing a drum. He loved the drum. His sister bought it for him and he played it for all his friends at the party. Show the students an appropriate picture to go with the story.

Development

- Play each instrument a few times for the class, encouraging them to listen carefully. Allow the students to take turns holding and *'playing'* the instruments. This can be done more easily by having them take turns to come up to the table with the instruments on it, allowing them to choose an instrument and explore the sound it makes. If there is a screen available play sounds on the instruments while behind the screen (or have a staff member or more capable student do this) and ask the students if they can name the instrument being played.

Concluding activity

- Sing a selection of songs with the class and have them take turns playing the percussion instruments while the other students clap in time.

Exemplar 1: Music

Differentiation

- Use closed questions as appropriate, since students may respond more confidently to *'Show me the drum'* rather than *'What is it called?'*
- If necessary, play the identification game showing the students the instruments first.
- Help students who are having difficulty playing the instruments with the beater to attain a physical awareness of the process involved by holding their hands initially as they play them.
- Play a similar sound game with other sound sources allowing the students to use their hands rather than a beater.
- Keep the lesson short to maintain the attention of all students. When repeating the activity, use different sound sources.

Linkage

- This serves as a foundation for work on rhythm skills and percussion.

Integration

- **SESE:** a trip to a shop that sells musical instruments.

Exemplar 2: Music

Strand: Performing

Strand unit: Song singing:
Little Miss Muffet

Level: Junior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and sing familiar songs recognise and imitate short melodies in echoes, developing a sense of pitch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> items for role play. material for Miss Muffet's dress, spider, bowl and spoon. pictures relating to the story of the rhyme. 	<p>The language development here will mainly be connected with the story in the rhyme. The students' attention can be drawn to the high note on 'whey' and the concept of high can be reinforced by hand gestures from the teacher. This note can then be termed 'high' laying the foundations for development of the musical language of pitch.</p>

Methodology

Introduction

→ The stimulus in the introduction to this lesson will be the picture or pictures relating to the story. The pictures should be discussed briefly and the story told, giving the students something to relate the song to when they are singing it.

Development

→ Say the words of the song with the appropriate emphasis on rhythm, encouraging the students to listen, and having them join in as they become familiar with the words. This can be done line by line, depending on the levels of ability of the students. Sing the song again, having the students listen for the first few times. Then have the class join in. At this stage, the students can take turns to play the characters in the story. This will keep their interest alive, and as they will be singing the song repeatedly during the role play, the tune and lyrics will be continuously reinforced.

Concluding activity

→ Sing each line of the song and leave out the last word, getting the students to sing this. Students may like to take turns doing this on their own. This activity lays the foundations for the ability to hear sound internally.

Exemplar 2: Music

Differentiation

- Students at all levels of ability will take part in this lesson quite easily and will enjoy doing so.
- The questions asked to prompt discussion of the picture can be of varying levels of difficulty (for example, ‘*Show me the spider*’ rather than ‘*What is that?*’ ‘*Is the spider small?*’ ‘*Is Miss Muffet big?*’ rather than ‘*Who is the biggest/smallest?*’).
- It may be an idea to have more than one spider as some pupils may not be confident ‘*acting*’ a part on their own.

Linkage

- **Listening and responding:** responding imaginatively to music through movement.
- **Percussion:** clapping/tapping/playing percussion instruments to the rhythm of the rhyme.

Integration

- **Visual arts:** making the spider and Miss Muffet for a wall display.
- **SESE:** the spider.
- **SPHE:** feelings—discussion built around how little Miss Muffet and the spider might have felt.

Exemplar 3: Music

Strand: Composing

Strand unit: Improvising and creating

Level: Junior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> select sounds from a variety of sound sources to create simple sound ideas record compositions in electronic media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> toothbrushes and sandpaper pieces containers with water (for example, plastic bottles) picture or video extract showing someone brushing their teeth and washing their face. 	<p>Discussion around what the students do when they get up in the morning will develop their vocabulary. There is no real emphasis in this lesson on musical language since the concept of relating sounds made in the classroom to their morning time activities will be challenging for the students and will provide the focus of the lesson.</p>

Methodology

Introduction

→ Show the picture or video of brushing teeth and washing and have a short discussion around this (giving the characters in the picture or video names).

Development

- Ask the students what they do when they get up in the morning, with a view to establishing that they brush their teeth and wash their faces. Rub a toothbrush on a piece of sandpaper and ask the students what they think it sounds like. The visual element of the toothbrush will help them make the link between the sound and the brushing of teeth. Have the students take turns making this sound with the sound-maker. Discuss what is used for washing and focus on the water element.
- Tell the students that you are going to make a water sound with the water containers. Have them take turns making this sound and tell them that today, it's the washing sound. Letting the students wet their hands and listen to the sound of water running can reinforce the water idea. Feeling the bristles on the toothbrushes and the texture of the sandpaper will lay the foundation for an understanding of how particular sounds are made.
- The simple sound composition will be based on four sentences. The class should be divided into four groups, one to illustrate each sentence as follows:
- I got up this morning—students *'jump'* out of bed.
 - I washed my face—students shake the water containers.
 - I brushed my teeth—students make the brushing sound.
 - I came to school—students say *'goodbye'* and wave.

Groups should be alternated to allow students to experience all four parts of the composition.

Concluding activity

→ Record the composition and play it for the students a few times. Stop the tape periodically to discuss what is happening.

Exemplar 3: Music

Differentiation

- Adapt the lesson to include fewer sounds.
- Spread the content out over two or more music lessons, repeating and reinforcing what has been covered before in the development of each lesson, and gradually adding to it as appropriate.
- Some students may not have the co-ordination to make the brushing sound and may need to be given another role in the performance.
- Use closed questions rather than open ones to make discussion easier (for example, '*Do you brush your teeth in the morning?*' '*Do you use a brush to wash your teeth?*').
- Broaden the boundaries of the composition to include some breakfast sounds.
- Narrow the compositional boundaries by confining the students to brushing sounds ('*Do you brush anything else?*').

Linkage

- **Performing:** perform the composition for another class or outside group.

Integration

- **SPHE:** link with a lesson on personal hygiene.

Exemplar 4: **Music****Strand:** Listening and responding**Strand unit:** Exploring sounds – Vocal sounds**Level:** Middle

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the difference between the speaking voice and the singing voice, and use these voices in different ways • recognise different voices • use sound words and word phrases to describe and imitate selected sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students' voices • voices of teacher and staff • screen or other device for 'hiding' source of voices • tape recorder • pictures of students/people talking, with words in a 'bubble' (for example, drawn by the teacher, using photos of students with simple captions, using photos scanned in on computer) • pictures of students/people singing. 	<p>The language development here focuses on making students aware of their capacity to use their voices in different ways. The foundation for awareness of musical elements of dynamics (loud, soft), pitch (high, low), texture (listening to one voice or a combination of voices), and timbre (is it a happy/sad voice) can be developed. Discussion can be centred around occasions when the students use their singing and speaking voices (for example, Who are they with? What are they saying? Why/what are they singing?). Students can be encouraged during the lessons to use their voices in different ways, and to take turns listening to others and speaking/singing themselves. The teacher can use his/her hands during singing to reinforce the idea of changing pitch (moving hands up for high notes and down for low notes). This will serve to highlight visually the difference between singing and speaking. Non-verbal students can be encouraged to identify whether another student is singing or speaking, or to identify the person whose voice he/she believes it is through gesture/body language. Students with little or no language may be able to make sounds of different volume and pitch and have them discussed in class.</p>

Exemplar 4: Music

Methodology

Introduction

- Display pictures of groups of people singing/talking together. This will be more effective if the people in the pictures are known to the students or if the speech in the pictures has a familiar theme (for example, a group of people eating together). Where the pictures are of people talking, a simple, short, age-appropriate text should be used in bubbles (for example, a lunchtime scene could be used with one character asking the other *'Are you hungry?'* and the other replying *'Yes'*. Another lunch-time scene could involve characters singing grace before meals).
- Briefly discuss the pictures, encouraging the students to note whether the characters are singing or talking, and to consider possible reasons for what they are doing.

Development

- Lead on from the introductory discussion into a consideration of times when the students sing and talk at school. This can be broadened to include discussion of whom they talk to and sing with. Divide the class into two groups and have one group talk (chat to each other) while the other group listens. Alternate this activity, and then repeat it, getting the groups to sing. Discuss students' reactions to the different listening experiences. Decide on a phrase the students use often (for example, 'good morning teacher') and have students take turns saying this while other students listen. Encourage the students to comment on whether voices are high/low or loud/soft in relation to other voices. Place two students behind a screen (or with their backs to the class) and have the class take turns identifying who is speaking (using the same familiar phrase). It is an idea to use students with very different voices initially to make the task easier until the students begin to develop discriminatory skills.
- This activity can also be done using members of staff or a mixture of students and staff, leading to an awareness of the difference between adult and student voices. Repeat the activity where students/staff members are singing a familiar musical phrase (for example, *'Baa, baa black sheep'*). Discuss the differences in the mechanics of singing and speaking (for example, *'What do we do when singing that we don't do when speaking?'* *'Do you like to sing?'* *'Why?'*). This activity can be developed in later lessons by playing familiar voices on tape and asking students to identify them.

Concluding activity

- Students say a familiar poem and sing a familiar song, noting the difference between the spoken and sung forms of expression.

Exemplar 4: Music

Differentiation

- The above lesson can be developed and carried out over a number of music sessions depending on the reaction and progress of the students.
- Opportunities can be taken during the school day to draw students' attention to their use of the singing and the spoken voice, and also to have them identify various voices.
- For students who are finding it difficult to identify voices behind a screen, the teacher can simplify the activity by letting the class see the students speaking or singing initially. The same students can repeat the process with their backs turned or hidden from the class as listening skills develop. It is a good idea to confine the discussion of people who speak/sing, or occasions when we speak/sing, to a specific area of the students' life (for example, at home, in school, at the shop), as this narrows the focus and makes it easier for students to relate to the sounds.
- Using familiar faces in the pictures for discussion (for example, photos with 'word bubbles' attached, digital photos, or photos scanned in on the computer) is a good idea since they relate more easily to the students' immediate environment.
- Recognition of familiar adult voices in the classroom can be extended to include other significant adults in the school environment (for example, principal, school nurse).
- Photographs of these adults on a chart, in conjunction with a tape of their various voices (using the same phrase), can be employed as a useful tool to develop discrimination. As students progress, this activity can be made more difficult by using voices from the radio or television, with magazine pictures.
- Students with limited language ability can be encouraged to make loud/soft, high/low vocal sounds. The musical elements of these sounds can be discussed.

Linkage

- **Performing:** song-singing.
- **Listening and responding:** discussing characteristics of vocal sounds heard, identifying the source of a vocal sound, matching pictures to sounds.

Integration

- **SESE:** discussion of school environment ('Who do we see and hear each day?' 'How do they help us?'), identification of significant adults in school environment, learning their names, using pictures and voices to match these adults, learning about the roles of these adults.
- **Visual arts:** drawing pictures of adults in the school environment taking part in school activities relevant to their roles.
- **Maths:** matching activities based on vocal sounds and pictures.

Exemplar 5: **Music****Strand:** Performing**Strand unit:** Early literacy**Level:** Middle

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> match selected sounds with their pictured source (nursery rhymes with relevant pictures) lay the foundation for an awareness of the link between sound and imagery recognise and perform simple rhythm patterns from pictorial symbols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nursery rhymes: <i>'Baa Baa Black Sheep'</i>, <i>'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'</i> (either sung or on tape) material for drawing pictures of black sheep and star for class viewing woolly toy sheep and shiny star (or collection of same) samples of other woolly and shiny things. 	<p>Language development will include discussion of the stories in the nursery rhymes (for example, <i>'What is the story about?' 'Where might you find a sheep?' 'Do sheep live in houses?' 'Have you ever seen a star?' 'When?'</i>).</p> <p>Encouraging the students to look at and discuss the pictures, and to sing and discuss the rhymes, will develop their ability to respond and communicate. Drawing the students' attention to the fact that it's quieter at night than in the day-time will provide an opportunity to develop the concepts of loud and soft (for example, <i>'Do you make loud noises when your little brother has gone to bed?'</i>). When getting the students to clap short patterns based on big and little pictures of sheep and stars, the foundations for an understanding of the duration of musical notes can be laid, using the language of big/long for the longer rhythm values and small/short for the shorter ones.</p>

Exemplar 5: Music

Methodology

Introduction

- Sing both nursery rhymes as a group and discuss (briefly) what is happening in the stories.
- Pass around the sheep and the shiny star(s) for the students to look at and feel.
- Ask them to talk about these items.

Development

- Ask the students to think about which objects match which rhyme. When the connection has been consolidated, other shiny and woolly or soft items can be passed around and the students can be encouraged to think about which items *'match'* or go with each nursery rhyme. Encourage the students to consider what picture could be drawn on the board (or flip chart) for each rhyme. It is likely that a sheep and a star will be chosen but some students may have other ideas, which can be discussed. If there are a few ideas, a vote can be taken and the most popular suggestions can be drawn for the class.
- When the pictures have been drawn, play or sing the nursery rhymes again. Have students take turns pointing out the appropriate pictures (if the group is large, the first line of the nursery rhyme will be enough to get the concept of matching the picture to the rhyme across). Draw one large and two small sheep on the board/flip chart and have the students clap one big and two little claps (*ta, ti ti*) to match the picture. Repeat this using big and little stars.

Concluding activity

- Get the students to suggest other nursery rhymes. Sing some of them and ask the students to think about pictures to go with them. This can be discussed at a subsequent music session.

Exemplar 5: Music

Differentiation

- This lesson may be spread over a few sessions depending on the stages of development of the students. Repetition of the lesson format using other rhymes will help to consolidate the concept.
- Some students may be able to relate the sheep and star to the rhymes, but may not yet be able to relate other soft and shiny things to the appropriate rhyme. They should be praised for their ability to match the less abstract objects to the rhyme. Repeated opportunities to relate sound to pictures or concrete objects will develop the students' abilities in this area.
- When suggesting pictures to go with the rhymes, some students may have plenty of suggestions while others might not yet understand that there are more ways than the obvious (sheep and star) to represent the rhymes (for example three bags of wool, a farmer in field with sheep, a little boy looking out the window at the stars).
- Looking at and discussing pictures drawn by classmates, or discussing possibilities in groups, may help students to expand their ideas.
- A follow up task to this lesson would be to get the students to draw their own pictures to go with a specific nursery rhyme.
- Some students may have difficulty thinking of, or drawing, pictures, and an alternative task would be to get the student to choose and colour in an appropriate picture from a selection of two, or simply to colour in a relevant picture with no selection process involved.
- In discussion, students with mild general learning disabilities may respond more easily and confidently to closed questions. The teacher can adapt his/her questions during class discussion to suit these students. When discussing the sheep, an example of a closed question would be, '*Does the sheep make a 'woof woof' sound?*'. This will be much easier for some students to answer than the corresponding open question, '*What sound does the sheep make?*'.

Linkage

- **Performing:** playing rhythm on percussion instruments based on picture sequences.
- **Composing:** identifying soft/quiet sounds on percussion instruments for night-time, playing fast and slow sounds to represent the sheep running or walking in the fields.

Integration

- **English:** stories about the farm, stories about night-time.
- **Maths:** sequencing rhythm patterns, discussing a sequence of events after teatime at home, simple timetable.
- **SESE:** a trip to the countryside to look at the sheep and lambs in the fields.

Exemplar 6: Music

Strand: Composing

Strand unit: Improvising and creating / Talking about and recording compositions

Level: Middle

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> select sounds from a variety of sources to create simple sound ideas, individually and in groups invent and perform short, simple musical pieces with some control of musical elements talk about his/her work and the work of other students record compositions on electronic media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> home-made shakers, egg shakers drums, tambours a short tape of storm sounds or video of storm scene. (A home-made tape on which the sounds of wind, rain, and thunder are heard separately may be useful here as it will make it easier for the students to discriminate between the sounds.) tape recorder. 	<p>There will be opportunities for language development based on the discussion of sounds heard during the storm. The focus should be on developing the musical or 'sound' language to describe these sounds (for example, 'Are they loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow?'). The discussion can be used to develop an awareness in the students of the relationship between sounds and emotions (for example, 'Do they make you feel safe, scared, sad, happy?').</p>

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Methodology

Introduction

→ A tape or video of a storm sequence can be shown and discussed briefly. Students can be encouraged to talk about big storms that they remember and what they were doing at the time.

Development

- Lay out the sound sources on a table and allow the students to take turns playing them. The selection of instruments should be small and of two main types (shakers and drums). The students can be encouraged to discuss the sounds made by the various instruments. Play the tape or video again and ask the students what they can hear during the storm. Focus on the rain sound and ask the students to consider how they could make a rain sound using the shakers. Give different students opportunities to make rain sounds.
- Repeat the procedure, focussing on the sound of the thunder and using the drums. Divide the students into two groups, one to make rain sounds and the other to make thunder sounds. Bring to the students' attention, through discussion, the fact that the rain sounds are quick and fast as opposed to the thunder sounds which are slow. Point out that there are spaces between the thunder sounds. The thunder group might need a leader to indicate when the thunder is to happen. Students can take turns doing this. Ask the students to consider how they could make a wind sound using their voices. Strong teacher input may be necessary.
- When the class has established how to make a wind sound, the students can be divided into three groups, each making a different storm sound.

Concluding activity

→ Students can record their group composition on tape and listen to and discuss the result, possibly suggesting how it might be improved upon.

Exemplar 6: Music

Differentiation

- This lesson can be expanded and developed to include more instruments and storm elements, or spread out over a few sessions, each one dealing with a different storm sound.
- As the teacher embarks on the lesson, he/she will be able to determine the level at which to pitch it, according to the response of the students.
- Visual elements can also be added (for example, switching on and off a light for the lightening, swaying with leaves to portray the wind in the trees).
- The students can be given wet objects or clothes to feel, adding a tactile dimension. A fan may be used to reinforce the idea of wind blowing.
- Some students will have more imaginative ideas than others depending on their cognitive and developmental stage, and each idea should be considered as important in the overall composition.
- This lesson can be varied by asking the students to consider how they might make storm sounds using their bodies (for example, rumbling feet on the floor for thunder, tapping fingers on the desk for rain, whistling for wind).
- Students can then be given a choice as to how they will make storm sounds. The teacher may need to have a great deal of input into discussion initially, but may gradually lessen this in subsequent lessons as students get more accustomed to the idea of reflecting events through sound composition.
- Subsequent lessons should begin with a quick recap on a previous composition, and connecting new compositions with previous ones may be helpful (for example, going to school on a rainy morning).
- Students with mild general learning disabilities may have difficulty in creating and composing if they are not given specific boundaries within which to work.
- Instead of asking, *'How can we make a rain sound?'* the teacher may need to ask, *'How can we make a rain sound using shakers?'* As with all lessons, closed questions rather than open ones may bring a more confident response from students with mild general learning disabilities.

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Linkage

- **Exploring sounds:** listening to weather sounds in the environment and discussing them.
- **Performing:** performing sound compositions for other classes and for visitors.

Integration

- **Visual arts:** drawing/painting pictures of a stormy day.
- **English:** the story of a stormy night.
- **Drama:** dramatising the storm.

Exemplar 7: Music

Strand: Listening and responding

Strand unit: Playing instruments, song singing

Level: Middle

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop an awareness of texture in percussion accompaniment • experience how percussion accompaniment can be built up at various stages during a song • develop their understanding of tempo in music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • song <i>'The More We Get Together'</i> (previously taught) with altered lyrics • picture of a rainbow scene • coloured arcs with velcro backing, for each colour of the rainbow • felt or chart with velcro pieces strategically placed • coloured scarves (paper hats, crepe paper strips) • percussion instruments. 	<p>Naming the colours of the rainbow, talking about the rainbow picture, using fast/slow in relation to the tempo of the music and more/less in relation to the number of different colours and instruments involved.</p>

Exemplar 7: Music

Methodology

Introduction

- Show the students the rainbow scene and discuss it, with a view to naming colours and establishing the position of the rainbow, the grass, the flowers, etc. (for example, high/low/in the middle). Ask them if they have ever seen a rainbow. Relate, briefly, a story about a leprechaun tricking someone into looking away from and losing a pot of gold (emphasising that it is fiction), in order to gain the students' attention and heighten their interest in the rainbow.

Development

- Put the following lyrics to the tune of *'The More We Get Together'* and sing them for the students, getting them to join in as they get used to the new lyrics:

*Have you ever seen a rainbow, a rainbow, a rainbow,
Have you ever seen a rainbow with colours so bright?
There's red light and orange light and yellow light and green light.
Have you ever seen a rainbow with colours so bright?
Have you ever seen a rainbow, etc.
There's blue light and indigo and violet so beautiful
Have you ever seen a rainbow with colours so bright?*

- Tell the students that you are going to make a rainbow with the coloured arcs by placing them on the chart (or felt). Sing the song slowly and place the appropriate coloured arcs on the rainbow as the students are singing. Have the students take turns making the rainbow using the sequence of colours in the song each time.
- Divide the class into groups. Use the coloured scarves to define the groups visually. Give each group a different instrument (four triangles, four tambourines, etc.), and ask them to play two beats on their instruments with the appropriate colour in the song. Sing the song again and have the students practise playing, and keeping their instruments silent, at the relevant lyrics during the song.
- The students come in progressively with their instruments during the song. The 'red group' can also play for each subsequent colour, as can the orange group, etc., and the texture of the rhythm accompaniment can be built upon in this manner. This allows the students to experience how accompaniment can be expanded and developed.
- During the above activities, individual students should be asked to put the colours on the rainbow at the appropriate moments. This gives a visual display to correspond with the introduction of the various instruments. Varying the tempo of the song-singing allows the students to see how this affects the speed at which the colours are put up. They will also have the experience of speeding up or slowing down the percussion accompaniment.

Concluding activity

- Play a lively tune/musical extract and have the students perform the percussion accompaniment.

Exemplar 7: Music

Differentiation

- Shorten the song to include a lesser number of colours (for example, instead of introducing the four colours that are in the first verse, adapt it to include only two, *'red light so beautiful and green light so beautiful'*).
- Attach large coloured circles or ribbons to a schoolbag and substitute the schoolbag for the rainbow, giving students something more familiar to work with (there's red, and green, etc.).
- Ensure, through observation, that instruments used are appropriate to the students using them and change them if necessary.
- Have smaller groups play the instruments and allow the other students to simply listen to how the percussion accompaniment is built up.
- Give students who cannot physically reach up to place the colours on the chart, or who have difficulty with visual discrimination of materials at a distance, their own individual coloured materials with which to work (for example, inset boards with coloured shapes to put in place as the song progresses, beads to place in a bowl at the appropriate times).
- Have a group of students wearing scarves of various colours stand up, or raise their hands in front of the class as the colours are added to the tune. This gives the students involved a kinesthetic representation of the sequence of colours while giving their classmates a visual one.

Linkage

- **Song-singing:** teach other songs with colour as a theme (for example, *'Tie a Yellow Ribbon'*).
- **Composing:** encourage the students to compose lyrics to the same tune, based on other colourful things in their environment (for example, *'Have you seen the flowers/cars?'*).

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Integration

- **Maths:** naming colours, sequencing colours.
- **SESE:** viewing a prism and looking at rainbow colours, making a rainbow with mist (water hose) on a sunny day.
- **Visual arts:** painting a rainbow picture, making a 3D rainbow.

Exemplar 8: Music

Strand: Listening and responding

Strand unit: Exploring sounds

Level: Senior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to, identify, and describe sounds in the environment with increasing awareness recognise and classify sounds using different criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> short story, composed by a teacher, about a person going for a walk and hearing various sounds pictures of sound makers in the environment (for example, machinery, animals, people, the school bell). 	<p>The focus will be on the development of musical language as the students describe sounds heard in the environment (for example, loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow, getting louder/softer, getting faster/slower, etc.) The ability to classify sounds into different categories will be developed (for example, the car makes a machine sound).</p>

Methodology

Introduction

→ Tell a short story about a person going for a walk (in the town or country, depending on the location of school), and show pictures to match the sounds he/she heard. There should only be four/five sounds in the story. If possible, these should be sounds that the students are likely to hear when they themselves go outside to listen to sounds in the environment (for example, Tom passed a school and heard students singing). Discuss the story briefly with the students, relating the sounds to relevant pictures, and tell them that they will be going outside to listen to all the sounds they can hear. Emphasise the importance of maintaining silence in order to hear the sounds around them. This can be made more exciting by suggesting to the students that they are going to make the silence and wait to see what sounds will come into their silence.

Development

→ Bring the students out to the schoolyard and settle them down where they can sit comfortably. Have them listen for short periods at a time (for example, two minutes) and then take turns to each tell the group one thing they heard during the silent time. Using a timer for this, with a distinctive noise to signal the end of the silent time, will clearly define the time for group silence, making it easier for the students. Each time, have short discussions with the group to establish characteristics of the sounds heard (for example, loud/soft, scary/happy etc.), and to classify them informally into sound groups (for example, a train: *'Is that an animal sound?'*, *'Is it a machine sound?'*). This process can be repeated three to four times, depending on group reaction and concentration levels.

→ Display pictures in the classroom and ask the students to take turns picking out ones that match sounds they heard while outside. Ask each student to tell the group one thing about the sound or, alternatively, ask the student a question about the sound.

Concluding activity

→ Sing a song related to one of the sounds heard in the story or during the listening periods outside (for example, *'Leaving on a Jet Plane'*). Ask the students to draw pictures to represent some of the sounds they heard while outside.

Exemplar 8: Music

Differentiation

- Narrow or extend listening periods, as appropriate, to students' level of achievement at listening task.
- Give students one type of sound to listen for (for example, an animal sound, a human sound), thus narrowing the boundaries of the activity for them.
- Arrange for students who tend to be hyperactive, and may find it difficult to sit in silence for any length of time, to go for a walk with a staff member and listen for sounds, reporting back to the group on what they have heard.
- Some students may need a multiple choice of pictures (two or three) as the concluding activity, colouring the one which matches a sound heard. They may need to be reminded again of sounds that have been heard and discussed in order to choose the appropriate picture. Others may enjoy being left to draw and colour their pictures independently.
- Use closed questions (for example, *'Did you hear a dog barking?'*) to focus the questions for students. This may be extended to include questions with options as the student progresses (for example, *'Did you hear a dog or a cow?'*).
- Tape the listening sessions and repeat the discussion of the sounds heard to reinforce auditory discrimination of these sounds.

Linkage

- **Composing:** have the class compose a sound sequence based on the sounds heard outside during listening periods.

Integration

- **SESE:** nature walk.
- **Visual arts:** make a collage of the outdoor school environment.
- **Maths:** develop a picture pattern based on sounds heard. Draw and play this pattern.

Exemplar 9: **Music****Strand:** Performing**Strand unit:** Literacy**Level:** Senior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise the shape of melodies on a graphic score or in standard notation discover how pentatonic tunes (based on five notes: <i>d,r,m,s,l</i>) can be read, sung, and played become aware of how staff notation can reflect changes in pitch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> board/flipchart song: <i>'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'</i> (previously taught) copy of musical score of first line of song (staff notation) for each student picture of a scene including objects in the sky and on the ground (for example, cars, airplanes). 	<p>The focus in this lesson will be on the musical language of high/low, getting higher/getting lower in relation to pitch. Using up/down, going up/going down, and up high/down low will help to consolidate understanding of this musical language. Pointing out areas where the tune <i>'jumps'</i> from note to note (e.g. <i>Swing Low 'jumping'</i> from <i>m</i> to <i>d</i>) will serve as a foundation for an understanding of intervals in music.</p>

Methodology

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Introduction

→ Display a large scene containing elements on the ground and in the sky (this should not be too *'busy'* or cluttered), and discuss briefly what the students can see in the picture. Ask them what is *'up high'* (for example, airplane, cloud, bird) and what is *'down low'* (for example, car, shop, road). Encourage them to think of things that they see that are *'up high'* and *'down low'*.

Development

→ Remind them that, in music, notes can be high and low. Have them echo your singing of some high and low notes using hand gestures. Have individual students sing high or low notes. Display the staff notation of the first line of *'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'* (as far as chariot) on the board or flip chart and use a pointer to point to the notes as the class sings the line. Discuss what words are on the high notes (*swing, sweet*), and on the low notes (*low, -ot*). Sing/play the line using hand gestures to reflect the shape of the tune. Draw a sky above the stave and have the students suggest things you could put in that are up high. Repeat the procedure in the drawing of the ground below the stave. Have students take turns coming up to the chart and using the pointer, or their hands, to follow the notes while the class is singing. Give the students copies of the musical notation and have them follow the notes with their fingers while singing the line.

Concluding activity

→ Have the students draw in the sky and the ground above and below the notation on their individual copies. Limit the amount of things they are to put in the pictures (for example, three things in the sky, three on the ground). They can then pick out the notes that are nearest the sky and the ground. Have the students discuss their work and the reasons why they selected various objects to put in the sky/on the ground.

Follow-up lessons

→ Other lines in the song can be used in the same way to develop students' awareness of the shape of the tune. Eventually students may reach the stage where they can follow the notation and fill in the sky and ground for larger sections of the song, or indeed all of it. Having the students *'join the dots'* gives them a visual representation of the fluctuations in pitch and also of note duration.

Exemplar 9: Music

Differentiation

- Students who have difficulty following the notes on the staff can be asked to reflect the shape of the tune through movement (for example, hand/arm movements). Using the three line staff and simple sentences put to music on a theme familiar to the students, will be effective for those not yet ready for the five line staff.
- For some students, the lines going across and down in musical notation may be confusing. In this case, it is an idea to give them copies of the notes, represented by dots or circles and in their correct positions, without the staff or bars. They can draw the sky above and the ground below these circles and follow them with their fingers as the song is sung. Joining these 'dots' will give them a line reflecting the changes in the pitch and the duration of the notes.

Linkage

- **Listening and responding:** work on pitch variations.

Integration

- **Visual arts:** have the students make or draw something with obvious high and low areas (for example, a skyscraper, a totem pole). They can then discuss where discs representing pitches from the song notation might be placed.

Exemplar 10: Music

Strand: Composing/
Performing

Strand unit: Improvising
and creating / Literacy
(rhythm) / Playing
instruments

Level: Senior

The student should be enabled to:	Resources	Language development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall, answer, and invent simple rhythmic patterns using voice and instruments • show a developing awareness of musical elements (rhythm) • use percussion instruments to show the rhythm patterns in selected words • understand the manner in which syllables in words can reflect rhythm patterns • recognise and use some standard symbols to notate rhythm and metre • perform a simple rhythmic ostinato (repeated pattern). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • items found in a grocery shop • simple rhythm patterns (<i>ta, ti ti, ta a</i>) on separate charts • a range of percussion instruments. 	<p>The students will develop an awareness of how words can be broken into syllables, which will help them in the areas of pronunciation and word-attack skills. Discussion on the various items available in the grocery shop can be used to extend students' vocabulary. The focus will be on learning how to name each object clearly and confidently. Discussion of whether words/syllables are long or short can be used to develop understanding of differences in the duration of sounds in rhythm patterns (for example, sweets, pronounced with a lengthening of the <i>ee</i> sound can reflect the duration of <i>ta a</i> [minim]. Tea, pronounced appropriately, can reflect <i>ta</i> [crotchet]).</p>

Exemplar 10: Music

Methodology

Introduction

- Ask the students to name the items in the selection, prompting if necessary to ensure that pronunciations are clear and correct.

Development

- Have students take turns to pick an item. When they hold the item up, clap the rhythm of the word (while saying the word) and have the students echo your clapping, individually and as a group. Use hand gestures to indicate when it's the turn of the students to clap (for example, clap corn-flakes [*ta ta*] and immediately point towards the class or individuals who are to echo the clapping). As the students gain proficiency, this activity can be lengthened to an uninterrupted rhythm sequence, alternating between the teacher and the students and the naming of a variety of objects.
- Place charts for *ta*, *ti ti* and *ta a* (crotchet, quavers and minim) on the board, using standard notation with large circles for the note values. Discuss whether each item should go under *ta*, *ti ti*, or *ta a*, and have individual students place the items under the relevant chart (on tables or desks). The students can help to categorise as many items as possible under the appropriate rhythm notation. This can be further developed by creating simple rhythm sequences using an item from each group (for example, tea/*ta*, coffee/*ti ti*, milk/extended pronunciation for *ta a*), and having the students echo them.
- The items that involve combinations of the rhythm values on the charts can then be discussed (for example, 'Rice Krispies' *ta, ti ti*). Students can be asked to compose their own rhythm sequences, based on the names of two articles in the shop, and using percussion instruments to play the sequences. It might be helpful here to work in pairs, with one student pointing to the relevant charts while the other plays the rhythm and says the words. This can be extended to groups of three, in which playing the rhythm and saying the words are two separate activities. Have each group repeat its sequence four times. This will serve as the foundation for an understanding of repeated rhythms (ostinato).

Concluding activity

- Use 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' as a song for accompaniment by a rhythmic ostinato. Students will sing this easily, leaving them free to concentrate on rhythm work. Practise playing a rhythm based on peas, carrots (*ta, ti ti*) with the students and have one group in the class play this repeatedly while the other group sings 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'. Alternate the activity.
- **Note:** Placing pictures of grocery items around the classroom with words and rhythms highlighted will be useful for short revision activities to reinforce the concepts learned.

Exemplar 10: Music

Differentiation

- Pick single syllable items initially for students who are finding it difficult to clap more than one syllable.
- Allow students who have difficulty with vocalisation or pronunciation to point to or simply pick up the item they want to buy.
- Students who are limited physically can use their own individual way of signifying the items they want in the 'shop'.
- Percussion instruments used should be appropriate to the students' capabilities. (See '*Planning for differentiation*' in the '*Classroom planning*' section.)
- Students who are not yet ready for standard notation can work with pictorial notation (for example, pictures of two small coins for *ti ti*, a bigger one for *ta* and an even bigger one for *ta a*).
- Use tangible 3D objects to reflect the rhythm sequences for students who have difficulty with visual discrimination (for example, cubes of the same size, with an indentation to signify *ta a* as opposed to *ta*, cubes of different colours to indicate different note values).
- Students who are uncomfortable with clapping or playing rhythms on their own should work in groups initially, as this takes the pressure off them and makes them more comfortable with the task in hand.
- A student who has difficulty with playing the rhythms can be the shopkeeper. In this way he/she will have the chance to observe and to learn from the activities of classmates.
- Students may benefit from being allowed to taste or smell some of the items in question. This will maintain their interest and give them another association for the relevant words and rhythms.
- '*Call and response*' singing can be introduced into the lesson for students who are capable of it.
- The aim is to have students answer the question '*What will you buy?*' sung to the notes *s m s m*, with the response '*I will buy*', sung to the notes *m r d d*. Model the question and answer melodies. Students may take some time to get used to this and those who are not ready can stay with the activities outlined in the development of the lesson. As students get used to the idea of singing the question and answer, it is likely that more and more will want to try.

Integration

- **English:** work on breaking words into syllables.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the music curriculum

Music technology can be particularly useful as an aid in delivering the music curriculum to students with mild general learning disabilities as it allows for visual representation of musical elements and instruments (in conjunction with the aural), and can make access to compositional and performance activities easier for students with limited motor skills or physical disability.

Points to note

- The use of MIDI¹ (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) instruments and assistive technology provides new challenges for all students. It also allows students with physical disabilities to participate more fully in musical activities.
- Some students with mild general learning disabilities find it difficult to co-ordinate the physical, motor, and cognitive skills required to use standard pitched instruments. Music technology can enable them to manipulate sounds and pitches to create and play musical pieces involving many different elements.
- The internet is a valuable tool that provides information on various instruments, musical events, and musical genres. It also facilitates student-teacher collaboration and collaboration with peers, nationally and internationally. Relevant software, musical scores/lyrics, and soundtracks can be downloaded from the internet for classroom use and discussion.
- For those who find it difficult to record their music on paper for further adaptation, or for playing by others, the computer can reproduce the musical notation of compositions for their portfolios.

Input devices

Keyboards

- A range of MIDI keyboards is available for musical input to the computer.
- Small ones with miniature light action keys (not much pressure needed to produce the notes) are useful for students with limited reach or strength.
- Full-sized keys can be played by hand or by using other parts of the body (for example, foot).
- Short, two octave keyboards, which can be transposed, have the advantage of being small enough to fit across a wheelchair.
- Two octave keyboards are also useful for students who may find it easier to focus on the musical task at hand using a smaller range of notes.
- Touch ('velocity') sensitivity is normally desirable (the volume of the note depends on the pressure applied), but a keyboard with an adjustable (fixed) velocity may be preferable for students with a light or variable touch, as they can be set to respond to individual playing styles.

Ultrasonic sensors

There are devices available which sense a performer's position, using an ultrasonic beam, to play notes on a scale or a tune that has been stored. Sounds are played when the beam is disturbed or broken. These devices allow students with limited mobility to perform. They may be suitable for use during a differentiated class project in which one group of students composes the music by inputting and editing sounds and pitches, while others are involved in the performance. Beams can be adjusted to respond to movements ranging from a few centimetres to many metres.

¹ MIDI is a standardised connection and set of messages that allows communication between music equipment of different types.

Switches can be attached to the computer in order to produce sounds that have been programmed into the computer. The combination of an ultrasonic sensor and switch-controlled sound effects can make for interesting and motivational composition and performance.

Drum pads and triggers

MIDI drum pads are touch sensitive and usually need to be hit hard with a stick. Some of these pads have '*trigger inputs*' to which other pads and sensors can be connected, allowing their use by students who may not have the motor co-ordination or physical ability to strike the drum pads with sufficient force.

Pitch converters

Software that analyses and corrects pitch, if desired, is available. Notes can be entered into the computer using sound input devices. It is also possible to enter notes with the singing voice. Students who lack confidence in their ability to sing in tune will benefit from singing into the computer, having the pitch corrected, and listening to the result.

Note: There is a wide variety of ways in which students can operate equipment (computers, musical instruments, sensors) in their use of music technology. It is not within the scope of this document to detail these, but information can be obtained from agencies involved in working with music technology in education and performance.

Assessment

Methods of assessment in music are outlined in *The Primary School Curriculum: Music* (p. 82), and are developed in detail there. Particular factors that relate to the assessment of students with mild general learning disabilities are outlined below.

Teacher observation

The following table outlines contexts in which teachers can assess (through observation) students working in groups or as individuals (*The Primary School Curriculum: Music* p.85). It also notes areas where levels of ability should be particularly monitored in assessing students with mild general learning disabilities.

Activities	Skills to be monitored
Listening attentively to sounds and music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ auditory discrimination ■ attention span.
Talking about what has been heard as part of class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ language development ■ levels of confidence in the ability to speak out in discussion.
Illustrating or writing about what has been heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ writing skills ■ ability to convey response in pictorial form.
Listening to the responses of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ oral comprehension.
Moving to music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ co-ordination and motor skills ■ balance ■ spatial awareness.
Singing a favourite song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ memory for lyrics ■ ability to sing in tune ■ pronunciation ■ breath control ■ posture.
Playing an instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ holding the instrument correctly ■ producing a clear sound ■ improvising melodies and rhythm.
Reading a simple rhythmic or melodic pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ visual discrimination ■ left to right orientation ■ reproducing pattern—what comes most easily vocally ■ using percussion and pitched instruments.
Sharing ideas for a composing activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ working collaboratively ■ comprehending the ideas of others.
Attempting to record a composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ability to contribute ideas (vocally, pictorially) ■ ability to use standard/graphic/pictorial notation ■ ability to use ICT or tape recorder to record composition.
Rehearsing a performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ability to work as part of group ■ confidence in remembering and carrying out individual role.

Teacher-designed tasks and tests

In general, tests should be informal and designed so that no student will be made to feel that they are below standard in music.

Work samples and portfolios

A portfolio gives the students tangible evidence of work done, and can be used as a vehicle for the development of self-esteem, as students take pride in showing others what they have done. This is particularly important for students with mild general learning disabilities.

The portfolio could contain the following:

- pictorial/graphic representations of songs and compositions (reflecting the student's level of response to composition activities)
- taped recordings of compositions
- taped verbal responses to musical extracts
- photographs of musical outings/school performances with corresponding thoughts/responses in written, pictorial, or taped form.

Projects

Elements of project work particularly suited to individual students with mild general learning disabilities can be decided following the assessment of a student's needs. Project work allows scope for the variation of tasks to suit the capabilities of different students, thereby allowing them to contribute in a constructive way to outcomes of the overall project.

Using assessment to build confidence

It is extremely important to praise and encourage students with mild general learning disabilities as they progress musically. Positive findings during teacher assessment can be shared and discussed with students who, at all times, should be aware of their successes. Certificates of achievement are particularly useful as students can take pride in these and show them to their peers and members of the wider community. Students should be involved in discussing their own individual progress, thus making them active participants in the learning progress. Involvement in target setting and reviewing progress toward targets will increase the students' confidence.