



## A 'FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS' DOCUMENT FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSIC COORDINATORS

### THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR MUSIC & THE MODEL MUSIC CURRICULUM

#### What is the difference between the music national curriculum (NC) and the new model music curriculum (MMC)?

- The MMC published March 2021 does not replace the pre-existing national curriculum for music.
- The MMC is designed to complement the existing NC and provide examples of music activity.
- The MMC is non-statutory; it is designed to assist rather than prescribe.
- The music NC remains statutory.

#### What should we do differently in school as a result of the MMC?

- Depending on your existing music activities you *may* not need to do anything differently.
- However, at the very least you should review your current activity in order to be clear whether you are providing full music NC coverage.
- Now would be a good moment to review and update your school music plan.

#### What are some of the key points emphasised in the MMC that I may not have concluded from reading the NC alone?

- The MMC complements the National Plan for Music Education and is intended to be used by specialist *and* non-specialist music teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- It is important to set aside discrete music teaching time in key stages 1 & 2.
- Pupils should have access to both rhythmic *and* melodic instruments.
- At key stage two whole class instrumental teaching is recommended.
- The importance of introducing age-appropriate notation (initially graphic, followed by stave).
- There is an expectation that music is for all – this includes those children with SEND.

#### What does Ofsted say about the MMC?

“The Department for Education's non-statutory Model Music Curriculum (MMC) sets out a clear intention and ambition for music education in key stages 1 - 3 that is both welcome and much needed.

As with any published or self-created scheme of work, however, the effectiveness of the MMC in any individual school that follows or draws upon it will depend on the way it is implemented and the impact that it has on pupils' learning in that school.

Ofsted's expectation is that

- schools and academies have clear, well-sequenced plans for the music curriculum that at least match the ambition set out in the National Curriculum (and for the Early Years, key stage 4 and the sixth form, where appropriate)
- these plans are delivered with sufficient time and resources, and good teaching, with teachers supported well through quality CPD
- this all has good impact as seen by secure and incremental learning of the technical, constructive and expressive knowledge that pupils need for their future participation in and enjoyment of music.

There will be no pre-requisite from inspectors that schools should adopt the Model Music Curriculum - as the MMC foreword states, it is designed to assist rather than prescribe. However, there remains every expectation that schools have in place a music curriculum that is ambitious, well-sequenced, implemented well, and which leads to good musical outcomes for all pupils.” (Ofsted 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

### **What sort of examples in the MMC might I find most useful?**

- Because it is non-statutory you are not obliged to follow the examples in the MMC.
- But by looking at the details such as suggested listening, singing repertoire, composing and musicianship activity you are very likely to find some new ideas, materials and methods.

### **All of our school music activity (apart from some singing) is delivered by visiting specialists: is this okay?**

- The honest answer is, ‘no’! It’s great that you are doing singing as this is a key part of the NC and MMC. However, there are other aspects such as composing and listening that visiting specialists won’t always have the time to do fully.
- This is probably the reason the MMC recommends: “At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils should receive a minimum of one hour of teaching a week; this may take the form of short sessions spread across the week.”
- This is an encouragement not simply to make use of visiting specialists, but for school staff to engage with music teaching too by delivering their own class sessions, however short.
- Music hubs and their lead organisations (such as SMS) acknowledge the curriculum and time pressures that primary schools are under.
- But as advocates of music education for all children we support the spirit of the MMC which in part is about schools creating more protected time for music activity.

### **The MMC says: “There is a strong intention that pupils should be ‘doing music’ as much as possible, including performing their compositions and improvisations.” We probably don’t do enough of this so how can we improve on these aspects?**

- If you have a visiting specialist delivering whole class instrumental tuition (WCET) they are probably already doing a little improvising activity as part of their general musicianship teaching.
- However, because of time constraints and the need to improve instrumental technique your visiting tutors can’t cover improvising and composing in the depth required by the national curriculum.
- Please don’t feel daunted by this! It *is* possible for classroom teachers to provide effective composing and creative activity within short periods of time, so long as it is set aside regularly.
- If some of your staff already have some musical knowledge, they will be able to use some of the suggestions in the MMC to develop improvising and composing activities using standard untuned *and* tuned classroom percussion instruments
- If you and/or your staff have little or no musical knowledge you will see listed on the page below some of the ways in which Swindon Music Service can help you with this.

### **And what about listening?**

- If you don’t already do regular listening at your school, there are all sorts of easy and fun ways to build this into your music plan. For example, have you tried:
- Music in assemblies (e.g. with composer of the week) followed by discussion of the music in class for just 5 minutes. Use the 5 minutes for open questions about what the children heard. Over time you can encourage use of musical words and the ability to name instruments and musical elements.
- Or perhaps a piece of music played while you do the class register? Again, followed by a very brief Q&A.
- There are lots of useful listening suggestions in the MMC.

## I'm looking for help with curriculum planning and delivery. What can Swindon Music Service do for me?

If you are a music hub / SMS member school there are several ways in which you can access free advice, support and resources.

- All hub member schools receive a free Charanga (online music resources) licence, worth £200 annually. Every member of staff can have their own log-in and every pupil can access materials from home, if you so wish.
- For staff who are musically inexperienced there is a wealth of appropriate Charanga material they can tap into to support delivery of the music national curriculum.
- Going forward SMS will continue to provide schools with advice and tips on how to make best use of Charanga resources.
- Hub member schools can access a wide range of singing resources (including backing tracks and vocal scores) via the member section of the SMS website **smscio.org**
- As a hub member you can also access a growing range of help documents and videos both about doing music and how to plan for it. These are available via the SMS website.
- Hub member schools also get free associate membership of Music Mark which is the national advice and lobbying organisation for music education.

In addition, to support your music curriculum, you can buy-in a wide range of services from SMS, some of which are listed below.

- **Staff training** on how to deliver music in your own classroom (opt into Silver or Gold hub membership or see the buy-as-you-go menu on our website.) <https://smscio.org/schools/on-line-booking-calenders-for-schools/video-purchase-form/>
- A **Music 'health check'** meeting on music planning and self-evaluation.
- A **singing plan meeting** to help develop your whole school strategy.
- The ever-popular **Singing Festivals** for primary schools (performed at The Wyvern Theatre).
- **Whole class instrumental tuition** (as recommended by the MMC) delivered by SMS specialist tutors.
- After school clubs, small group and 1:1 lessons for **musical continuation** delivered by SMS specialist tutors.
- **Live, professional 'Roadshow'** performances at your school (choose from Wind, Percussion, Strings, Rock/Pop).

### Useful document links:

Model Music Curriculum (March 2021):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-music-in-schools>

National Plan for Music Education (2011):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/180973/DFE-00086-2011.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180973/DFE-00086-2011.pdf)

**For full details of how to order SMS provision please see the current SMS school order form, available via your headteacher.**

If you have any questions about this document, or how to order SMS services, you can contact:

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