KS3 musical progression: the benchmarks

	Lower KS3	Upper KS3	Extended KS3
Musical Understanding: *Through creatively engaging with the practical processes of 'music making and thinking in context', students understand . . .*	how and why sets of musical **devices** are used in different types of music	how the different **processes** of making music lead to it being created or realised in different ways across different styles, genres and traditions	how specific musical **conventions** are developed into a modified, coherent style that is distinctive to a composer or group of musicians
Music Making (in context): *Through creatively engaging with the practical processes of 'music making and thinking in context', students learn how to practically . . .*	• make a significant contribution when improvising and performing in an ensemble, including as a class group • take different roles within performing and composing activities demonstrating a range of individual skills while doing so • compose music for a specific purpose making use of appropriate musical devices	• make subtle adjustments to fit their own, fluently realised part within group performances to improve the overall quality • develop and sustain musical ideas when improvising or creating music to achieve intended outcomes • choose and use appropriate ways of creating and realising music in different styles genres and traditions	• perform stylistically, reflecting the distinctive character of the music • draw on internalised sound to manipulate musical ideas and make use of relevant notations • produce coherent, varied compositions that explore musical conventions and characteristics in a range of styles
Music Thinking (in context): *Through creatively engaging with the practical processes of 'music making and thinking in context', students learn how to think musically by . . .*	• justifying the musical devices selected to convey ideas in their own and others' work • listening for, identifying and explaining the use of detailed musical devices in context • refining and improving their work, taking account of venue, occasion and purpose	• evaluating the impacts of different styles genres and traditions in their own and others' work • identifying, analysing and assessing how the way pieces of music are created and realised reflects their contexts and origin • improving their own and others' work in relation to its intended purposes and functions	• evaluating the use of musical conventions and how different contexts are reflected in their own and others' music • making critical judgements when listening to, refining and discarding their own ideas • analysing carefully their own and others' music and suggest appropriate refinements
Range of likely contexts and focus – informing *all* learning	• where, when, what (venue, occasion, purpose) • time, place, culture; styles, genres, **traditions** • composers; individual pieces of music	• how (ways that musicians work) • styles, **genres** and traditions • composers; individual pieces of music	• who (making styles change over time) • **styles**, genres and traditions • composers; individual pieces of music
Specific creative/composing skills and challenges: a patchwork of requirements, building over time to include	How to create a motif / phrase with balance (Q+A?) / tune with a balanced structure How to create a chord sequence, and how to voice chords across single and multiple instruments (including accompaniment figurations) How to create and use chord clusters, non-diatonic chord sequences (including new / invented scales, chords, etc) How to create an effective riff, how to use riffs and loops across time to create effective structures, including phasing How to create / use sound sets, instrument combinations, sonorities of individual instruments, found and electronic sounds How to use effective mixes of repetition/contrast/development; and solo/unison/homophonic/contrapuntal How to 'transform' ideas: sequence, augmentation, tonality changes, inversion, etc – especially as a way of working with limited ideas How to consider foreground and background; tension and release; decoration/punctuation/interruption How to respond to different stimuli (artwork, film, media brief, sound worlds, styles/genres/traditions, poetry, abstract traditions, etc) How to use creative strategies, eg 'What if' questions; freedoms and constraints; using prior, non-musical knowledge to inform work, etc		

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Musical Understanding a detailed description of progression might suggest:	This describes understanding at a stage when pupils start to recognise and use 'ingredients' that are specific to a particular musical style, genre or tradition. They might now recognise that a 12-bar blues chord sequence is different from the sort of chord sequence used in a reggae song, or a folk dance. However, while they recognise why certain styles reflect a specific context, they tend still to focus on the 'what' of the music rather than the 'how': so their practical work often seems to have all the right things in it, but does not somehow gel into something stylistically secure. It is like a cook who has used all the right ingredients, but has not used the method carefully enough to make a great plate of food!	This describes understanding at a stage when pupils start not only to use the most appropriate ingredients, but also to understand the methods by which the ingredients can be brought together to make an effective, high quality outcome. To take the cooking analogy further, these pupils understand the 'method' – the different ways of putting the ingredients together. In musical terms, therefore, the pupils know how and why music is created and realised in different ways. They also know how to do this in a range of styles, genres and traditions, and recognise, for instance, that a shared, aurally developed arrangement of a folk song will be probably end up being more 'authentic' than if it were written out and performed with a computer-based score-writing package.	This describes understanding at a stage when pupils start to refine types of pieces within a given style. They know and are starting to understand how a range of artists use the basic ingredients and methods of blues in different ways, and how their music sounds different as a consequence. They don't just understand 'blues' music, therefore, but understand and can begin to replicate the blues music of different eras or artists. They can also begin to experiment, recognising that they can 'flavour' the music of one style by incorporating the 'ingredients' and 'processes' of another. They are not always capable of doing this successfully (which is more typical of a pupil working at level 8), but the process is starting out, and they understand connections and influences of one style upon another.
Music Making detailed practical skills might include:	Singing – genuine 2 / 3 parts (different rhythmic lines / metres); belted voice; folk voice; scat style; melismatic/bent notes (Indian/Gospel); vocalisation techniques (contemporary classical) Keyboard playing – single right hand / 5 finger melodies; with single finger chords; with fingered chord sequences; both hands; shaped chords Percussion / world instruments – different finger/hand positions (drumming); extended beater techniques (tuned percussion) Ensemble work – appropriate count-ins to a pulse; aural and visual cues; effective balance; maintain parts in different metres; how to rehearse Improvising – using rhythmic and melodic 'licks'; extended phrases; working within different structures; Notation: staff notation (rhythm; treble and bass); guitar tablature; lead sheet + chord boxes/symbols; graphics for contemporary genres; Music Technology: capturing and / or manipulating sounds and timbres		
Music Thinking detailed features of musical dimensions might include:	*Pitch*: Reinforce – scale (pentatonic, major and minor); step/leap; phrase (including call + response / Q+A) Introduce – scale (modal, blues, chromatic, raga, alternative tunings); motif/leitmotiv; riff; *Duration*: Reinforce – beat/pulse; basic metres (2, 3, 4); Introduce – mixed metres (5+7); compound time; dotted / swung / triplet rhythms; syncopation; polyrhythm *Dynamics*: Reinforce/introduce – accents and szforzandi; application of appropriate/contradictory dynamics within specific styles, genres and traditions *Tempo*: Reinforce/introduce - application of appropriate/contradictory tempi within specific styles, genres and traditions *Texture*: Reinforce – unison / solo / drone / layers / chord Introduce – triads / added 7th / 9th chords; chord clusters/dissonant; homophonic (polyphonic) / chord voicing; accompaniment figurations *Timbre*: Reinforce – families of instruments; different ensemble combinations Introduce - electronic sound sources; wave forms and manipulating / editing sounds (both analogue and digital) *Structure*: Reinforce – Binary/ternary/rondo/verse+chorus/ variation Introduce – arch, riff+loop based, head + improvisation		