

# Smart Starters



Regardless of their background and diverse needs, all children should have the opportunity to fully participate in music lessons and activities at school.

Teachers should consider how they can enable all children in the school to actively take part in music learning and music-making, as well as identifying and addressing potential barriers which may prevent a child from being involved in music.

Different cultural perspectives and experiences can bring fresh ideas and approaches into the classroom and support children to become the next generation of music professionals whose diversity of background and experience reflects life in the 21st century.



---

By focussing on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion you will be supporting the diverse backgrounds and needs of all the children in your school, and creating an environment where every child can thrive in music.

### A note of caution:

Ensuring that your music provision is equitable, diverse and inclusive is not something you can achieve overnight – it should not be a box-ticking exercise. It will likely involve some long-term planning and a shift of mindset.

However, if you are looking for some easy starting points to kick things off, then this document provides some quick wins that can have a positive impact.

Use this resource as your starting point – but remember that it is not an exhaustive list. Make sure that our suggestions below are not the only things that you consider!



## 1 Singing Assemblies

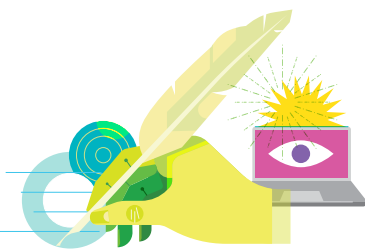
Make sure that the music you use in assemblies is inclusive and diverse. Include songs that celebrate a range of religious and cultural festivals. Build in different genres of music, not just Western Classical or pop.

---



## 3 Disadvantaged Learners and Peripatetic Tuition

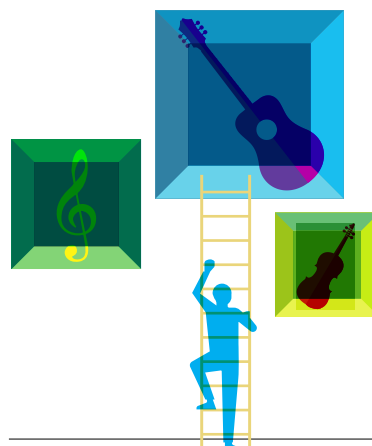
Carry out an audit to check that your Pupil Premium cohort is accessing music tuition to the same extent as your more affluent children. If not, consider using Pupil Premium funding to make lessons affordable, and access subsidies where possible. Be aware that some pupils may not be able to practise at home due to lack of space, noise levels, or family schedules; consider allowing them to practise at school in lunchtimes or after school.



## 2 Researching Composers

Give each year group a different composer and ask the children to find out about that composer as part of their homework. They can present their research in an assembly. Make sure that the composers you select are varied and diverse. Building in opportunities for pupils to share their favourite music in lessons can help create a culture where all types of music are valued and respected.

---

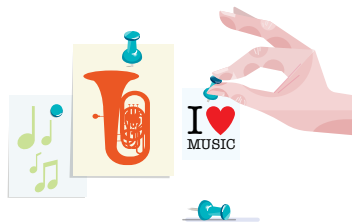




## 4 First Access

Having a strong First Access programme (whole class instrumental learning) will ensure that even children who don't choose to have peripatetic tuition have the opportunity to play an instrument. When choosing which instrument to use for First Access programmes, take into account the physical requirements for playing the instrument to ensure that all pupils are able to participate.

---



## 7 Music Displays

Review your music displays to ensure that they are inclusive and diverse. Is your music display board representative of your school community? For example, if you have Syrian refugees, are there Syrian composers / examples of Syrian music on the board?

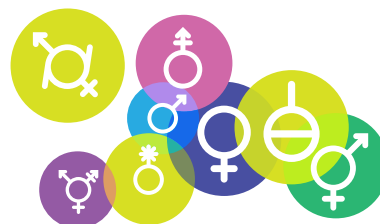
---



## 5 Your Community

Carry out a parent survey to find out about the musical skills and expertise of your community. You may find individuals who are professional musicians, and others who can deliver workshops or presentations on music from other cultures.

---



## 8 Consider gender and identities

Are you inadvertently steering pupils towards gender stereo-types within music? Are all the composers you learn about male? Are girls encouraged to take up brass instruments / drums? Can you teach pupils about trans musicians and performers?

---



## 6 Pupil Leadership

Consider appointing music leaders who can be the voice of pupils in your schools. Ask them about what music they want to experience and encourage them to lead music activities.

---



## 9 Check the calendar

Make sure your music events don't clash with specific days in religious / cultural calendars as it may mean that children from those religions / cultures may not be able to or be allowed to take part.

---



## 10 Celebrate

Run a music festival to celebrate everything the school has achieved in music, where every child who learns an instrument could play. Invite past pupils back to play and get the local community to help. Are there any local community choirs / instrumentalists who could take part?

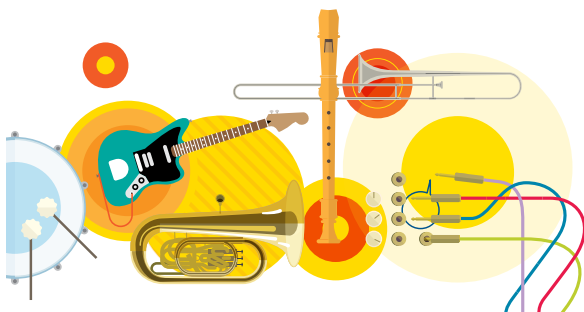
---



## 12 Performances and Trips

Do all children have the opportunity to see live performances? If there is a cost for a trip to a live performance, look at alternative sources of funding for children whose families will struggle to pay (e.g. Pupil Premium budget, PTA funds). If you offer trips on a first come first serve basis, how do you make sure that EAL children whose parents don't speak English, or children whose parents work shifts, won't miss out because the parents can't return the forms quickly?

---



## 11 Clubs, Groups and Ensembles

Carry out an audit to check that Disadvantaged Learners are accessing your clubs as much as more affluent children. Find out if there are specific barriers to certain groups of children taking part. Consider moving the day of the week and time of day when you hold rehearsals – children who don't attend after school clubs might be able to attend a lunch time club instead. Make sure that the music the children perform is diverse, covering different genres and cultures, and reflects the different cultures within the school. And finally, try to welcome any child into your ensembles regardless of what instrument they play. Be brave about incorporating new sounds into familiar repertoire!

---



## 13 Adaptive Instruments

Do you have disabled learners in your school who could benefit from an instrument specifically designed to accommodate their needs? You can research what's available at [ohmconnect.org.uk](http://ohmconnect.org.uk) or [drakemusic.org](http://drakemusic.org).

---

---

## Links:

### [Young Sounds UK](#)

A charity supporting young musicians from low-income families throughout the UK, tackling financial and social barriers.

---

### [Drake Music](#)

An organisation specialising in the use of technology to make music accessible for disabled and non-disabled musicians.

---

### [Music For All](#)

A charity that helps people of all ages and social backgrounds to make music, including offering grants and donating instruments.

---

### [OHMI Trust](#)

A charity pioneering the development and adaptation of musical instruments for people who are physically disabled.

---

### [Classic FM Diverse Composers](#)

Classic FM has some great articles about [Black composers](#) and [LGBTQ+ composers](#).

