ISM – The National Curriculum for Music. A revised framework for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in key stage 3 music: An Implementation Study

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Introduction

It is widely recognised that assessing pupil attainment and progression in music is erratic on a national level. Frameworks set out by governments, schools and teachers have varied wildly over the years to get the 'best fit' for all parties involved - whether that be pupils, teachers, parents, senior leaders or external bodies. Colwell (2004:3) states that 'the field is messy' and that 'arts professionals continue to have difficulty communicating on the issues among themselves', let alone with external bodies. However, despite all the work that has ensued to address this, there is still a large imbalance within the field. There is no standardised format for assessment and, as a result, educators must utilise their experience and knowledge in the field to generate curriculum and assessment frameworks which work within their own educational settings (with all their nuance), assess musical capabilities, and facilitate progress for every pupil in the classroom. But can a single framework encompass all these elements in a useful and effective way for pupils, teachers and the wider-school community? This term-long study aims to implement such a framework for a Key Stage 3 music cohort to see if improvements can be made to the quality of assessment and facilitation of learning, whilst remaining tailored and adaptable to a specific school setting.

Since the abolishment of the National Curriculum Levels in 2014, there has been an increased demand for suitable curricula and assessment frameworks which facilitate the best possible pedagogy for all subjects. Highly valued elements of pedagogy include: teaching relevant skills and knowledge recognised by pupils, teachers and parents; being able to plot attainment and progress over time; the avoidance of overburdening teachers with collecting and presenting large amounts of data unnecessarily; and being able to use assessment methods to further enhance the learning and progress of pupils and make it accessible to those who are key stakeholders in a pupil's education. However, the demand for these elements to be included in schools appears to be driven by teachers at a school-level rather than by government policy. Whilst there is 'no evident concern for the quality of today's arts educators' (Colwell 2004:3), there remains a 'continuing concern that better teachers and better teaching are always needed'. However, this is nothing new – this narrative has been commonplace for a long time, yet nothing appears to be changing.

Furthermore, since the 1960s, Jerome Bruner has provoked interest in being able to map pupil attainment and progress over time. The Spiral Model (Bruner 1960) was cutting edge in the way it approached different levels of learning and mastery of specific knowledge, skills and predispositions of a given subject. Pupils had the ability to move between levels based on their competence in a specific area which was viewed as inclusive to all. Swanwick and Tillmann (1986) followed by Fautley and Daubney (2019a) took this idea further and modified it to be more music focused. In this study, I will be implementing Fautley and Daubney's model of music assessment to evaluate the impact it has on the progress of Year 7 pupils in my school.

Study, Setting and Context

I work in a relatively small independent school of around 570 pupils as the Head of Upper School Music, teaching across all year groups from Year 7 to 13. All pupils in Year 7 (49) and Year 8 (50) are taught music in the classroom, as well as having access to paid instrumental or vocal lessons. When they reach Year 9, pupils are given the option to carry on with their music studies or to drop the subject ahead of their GCSE options which occur in the February of that year. The result is that music competes with Drama and Design & Technology, which occupy the same option block, to maximise GCSE uptake up in Year 10. The music department is made up of four full-time academic staff, including myself, and various other members of staff who assist with administration, events organisation and peripatetic teaching. The Head of Lower School Music, herein Teacher X, and I teach Year 7 and 8, whilst the teaching of the higher years is distributed amongst the whole of the department. The Director of Music is supportive of staff creating and implementing new schemes of work and assessment frameworks to improve music provision and pupil progress across the school.

Working in an independent school allows teachers more freedom to design curricula and assessment models, independent from the National Curriculum, when compared to working in schools in the maintained sector. Nevertheless, the school operates under a strict whole-school assessment framework which all teachers must adhere to when generating standardised data across all subjects. The whole-school framework asks teachers to regularly undertake summative assessments of pupils and provide each pupil

with a grade (developing, securing or excelling) each half term. However, the school does not standardise these grades by offering generic descriptors. Therefore, individual departments are required to determine these boundaries. Accompanying the grades are formative judgements made about a pupil's 'readiness to learn', 'response to teaching', and 'management of work' which are simply graded from 1-4, with 4 being the highest grade. Teachers across the school have reported feeling 'under pressure' to inflate these levels so that pupils do not regress in certain areas and the lack of a standardised assessment framework conflates the issue.

Furthermore, this kind of assessment does not truly reflect individual capabilities in different subject areas. Rather than clearly representing skill and knowledge capabilities that are subject specific, the school's current assessment framework assigns singular grades. This, in turn, perpetuates the idea that pupils are simply low, mid or high attainers and germinates notions of competence or incompetence in arbitrary ways over time. For example, a Year 8 pupil who is particularly strong at data analysis could be signposted as a low attainer in maths simply because statistics equates to a small percentage of the curriculum for that year and there is limited scope for recognising individual strengths. Whereas, in geography, the same pupil may be signposted as a high attainer in the subject as the analysis of population data equates to a high percentage of the curriculum for that year. Using the current whole-school framework, the recognition of the salient skill, in this case data analysis, is not present. Therefore pupils, parents and other members of staff are led to believe that the pupil is competent or not competent in any given subject, simply by looking at a single summative assessment grade.

In terms of academic music, there are multiple components to the discipline including, but not limited to, performing, composing, and listening and appraising. Within each of these areas are more specific skills and knowledge pupils need to learn as part of the curriculum. Assessing each of these areas demands different criteria for the assessment to be reliable. Whilst this issue may not be unique to music, it is important to recognise that assessment is far more complex due to the differing skillsets required of pupils.

With this contextual backdrop, the salient overarching question is - is it possible to implement a curriculum and assessment framework which incorporates the multifaceted nature of music into its method and enables pupils and teachers to see attainment and progress in different areas? Therefore, the literature review will explore important topics and issues surrounding music provision in the classroom on a national scale, curriculum design, legislation (both school and government policy), relevant theories underpinning contemporary frameworks, and appropriate assessment methods.

A Critical Review of the Literature

In order to determine the rationale for this study, I will critically review the literature available which justifies the need for curriculum and assessment reform in Key Stage 3 music. There are several trends within the literature which I will review thematically. The themes and salient issues arising from the literature review will provide justification for pursuing the framework which was used in the study and the subsequent research questions. Firstly, I will look at how assessment has evolved from historic methods, namely the National Curriculum levels to the current national practice.

Current Government Policy

The literature suggests that the government in the UK places high value on music in the curriculum and demands a high level of curriculum planning, implementation and assessment. However, the data which enables us to gauge success of a particular subject in the curriculum, suggests that music is struggling to recruit pupils for Key Stage 4 uptake (Daubney, Spruce & Annets 2019). The National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 music in England states that 'a high-quality music education should engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement' (DfE 2013:1). From this statement, we can deduce that the government places high value on pupils developing a love for music and recognising their talents within the subject. This subsequently has a positive impact on their motivation to pursue the subject in the future. The document also states the aim for all pupils to learn: how to perform, listen and appraise music; how to sing; how to play an instrument; how to use music technology; the inter-related dimensions of music (more commonly

known as the elements of music) and how to use them through different activities (DfE 2013:1). These aims clearly show that the government recognises the differences in skills and knowledge needed to succeed in music in Key Stage 3. The curriculum goes on to state that 'pupils should build on their previous knowledge and skills through performing, composing and listening' (DfE 2013a:2) which they learnt from the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfE 2013b). These documents, combined with the Department for Education's (herein DfE) GCSE subject content for music (DfE 2015), show there is a clear progression of skills throughout a child's education which uses a similar, if not identical, language for cogency and consistency. Therefore, the National Curriculum appears to lend itself to a curriculum model which recognises the equal importance of the different key skills and knowledge which are taught, learnt, and assessed at different levels throughout a pupil's education.

However, it is evident that the uptake of music in the UK at Key Stages 4 and 5 has shown a rapid decline (Daubney, Spruce & Annets 2019:2). In a sobering report created by Daubney, Spruce & Annets (2019), it is suggested that if this pace of decline continues, 'music education in England will be restricted to a privileged few within a decade, and the UK will have lost a major part of the talent pipeline to its world-renowned music industry' (ibid.:2). According to their statistics, there has been a 20% decrease in the uptake of GCSE music since the 2014/15 academic year and c.1000 music teachers have left the profession. They argue that this is a direct result of government policy and the prioritisation of the English Baccalaureate subjects (which does not include music) (ibid.). According to Daubney, Spruce and Annets, the flurry of government initiatives has caused them to lose sight 'of the key aims of cultural education' (ibid.) and has resulted in a case of all bark and no bite. The need for reform in music curriculum, assessment and policy is further emphasised by the fact that only 50% of state-funded schools teach music as part of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 and the majority of pupils who choose to pursue music can only do so if they come from a higher income household (ibid.). This lack of continuity of music provision is a warning to policy makers about the potential further downfall of music uptake and that meaningful reforms needs to be implemented.

Yet, this problem is not new. Indeed, in 1997, Swanwick recognised that the English and Welsh governments had a tendency to create a plethora of advice and policy for music teachers, but its validity was not being tested or reviewed (Swanwick 1997).

General Curriculum Design

The literature on the music curriculum recognises that music is multifaceted by nature and that should be reflected in its design and implementation. Anderson suggests that 'complexities in curriculum definitions follow into understanding characteristics of music curriculum, which is also difficult to define, due to the inter-relational dimension of its interactions' (Anderson 2019:120). This suggests that, due to the demands of the curriculum, there is a lack of coherency in what a curriculum should look like and be defined by. Anderson goes on to suggest that Key Stage 3 music is a 'complex learning landscape' (Anderson 2019:371) which is far from simple. Similarly, Spruce argues that schools and teachers recognise that there is a wide variety of musical attainment and musical contexts which should be reflected in assessment models whenever possible (Spruce 2001:129). Teaching and assessing different skills and knowledge areas in music is therefore complex and requires a substantial amount of forethought and planning in order to make it meaningful.

Philosophical Considerations

Some of the literature suggests that the growth and development of the whole child should be at the heart of curriculum design, rather than being based on public examinations. When considering the design and content of a music curriculum, Otto suggests that 'it is [the teacher's] responsibility to chart the proper course of education for the "whole" child and to maintain that course despite certain public pressures' (Otto 1966:61). These pressures may encompass political decisions regarding musical funding and status in the curriculum or the view of music's position in the subject hierarchy. He goes on to state that 'those of us engaged in music education must conduct a continuing evaluation of the music curriculum in an effort to emphasize those elements which appear to make the greatest contribution to the growth of a child and eliminate those aspects which seem to offer little to their development' (ibid.). He also states that music curriculum writers should closely consider the interests of the pupils they have in their schools as this

increased interest in the content of the curriculum allows for individual curricula to become successful (Otto 1966:62). Spruce (2001:118) goes further to say that musical achievement needs to be defined and assessed in order to articulate a set of philosophical and political principles about the nature and purpose of learning, the subjects being assessed [music] and the relationship between the school and society. Of course, this was written before the implementation of the National Curriculum, and perhaps giving this amount of autonomy to teachers could lead to too much variety in the curriculum and create difficulties in standardised testing methods, including GCSEs and A-Levels. However, the fundamental principle of this way of thinking is that schools and teachers should not lose sight of the importance of musical curricula which incorporates content that assists with more than just successes within standardised examinations.

International Perspective – Music Supplementing Curriculum

It appears that having music as a staple subject in the curriculum has positive effects on overall attainment in schools. James (1999) states that nations such as Japan, the Netherlands and Hungary consistently outperform the US in tests assessing achievement in science. He makes the rather loose assumption that this is because these nations value music highly in their curriculum, thus enriching learning in other key areas of education. However, it is important to recognise that music is not just a supplement to education. Liane and Alda (1999:15) suggest that 'music education practices reflect the instability generated at government levels, the lack of confidence music teachers have in their training, and a general belief that music in schools should only serve to support other subjects, or to make students happier, healthier, better, or even only to fill in free time'. By this, Liane and Alda are suggesting that the negative view of music in the curriculum is generated by those in government, despite the claims made in the National Curriculum document.

Staff Wellbeing

An often-overlooked aspect of curriculum and assessment development, is the workload it places on the teachers delivering it. 'Datafication' (Fautley & Daubney 2019b:11, Robert-Holmes & Bradbury 2016) is a term which is used frequently in recent literature. It describes an over-reliance on pupil data to gauge how well schools are performing, how well teachers are teaching and how well pupils are learning. As a result of

this, Fautley and Daubney (ibid.) suggest that overbearing 'data drops' (times in the academic year where summative data about attainment and behaviour is collected) are a salient issue in staff workload and well-being and that they are a prominent feature in a lot of schools in England. Robert-Holmes and Bradbury (2016:1) state that 'the concept of datafication is used to understand the processes and impacts of burgeoning data-based governance and accountability regimes'. They are confirming that this is a direct result of external forces, namely the government, putting pressure on schools to produce large quantities of data which do not necessarily improve the quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the data which is produced is not necessarily scrutinised or regulated by those who deal with it. Fautley (2011) states that 'SLT [Senior Leadership Teams] don't know what a level 5 or level 6 in music looks or sounds like. As long as you are giving them the levels they require, they are happy'. In other words, if a spreadsheet cell is conditionally formatted to turn green if a pupil surpasses a certain mark, it would not cause concern for the SLT. However, the important factor of what that data tells us about the nuances of a child's attainment and progress is often overlooked. It could be argued that this is the wrong approach and that SLTs should be trusting the expertise of their teachers and facilitating more tailored assessment systems for different subjects. Whilst collecting data is an important part of teacher accountability for pupil progress, if data drops are here to stay, it would be beneficial to pupil progress and staff wellbeing to develop curriculum and assessment frameworks that generate more meaningful data, which could then be translated into universally understood data for senior leaders and government inspectors.

Historical Assessment Methods

Assessment in England historically revolved around National Curriculum levels (herein NCLs) which were in place from 1988 to 2014. According to Fautley and Daubney (2019b), NCLs served as a significant backdrop to the ways in which assessment was both conceptualised and operationalised in schools. Schools in the maintained sector were expected to adhere to this assessment policy which included all subjects in the National Curriculum. In terms of the music curriculum, the NCLs did not clearly identify the differences between the various key components of the subject, including composing, listening and performing (ibid.). For example, a single level would incorporate a range of different skills and knowledge laid out in short paragraphs, but there would be no clear delineation between the different skills. This task would be left to

the teacher, and it would not be a simple one, especially when trying to plot progression across levels as a pupil progresses. It is suggested by Fautley and Daubney that teachers who were implementing the NCLs, struggled to distinguish between the learning outcome (what you observe taking place) and learning objectives (what you set out to teach pupils) and there was a lack of coherence between each level too (ibid.). More specific sub-levels were generated by many schools in order to resolve this issue. However, this was not an official requirement from a government perspective and proved to be very complex, hard to use and understand in a meaningful way (Fautley & Daubney 2019b). This, combined with other issues, such as the lack of coherence between NCLs (Fautley & Daubney 2019b) and the liquidation of the governing body for assessment (the Qualification and Curriculum Authority), meant that in 2012, the government abolished the NCLs and gave the responsibility of generating and delivering assessment frameworks to the schools themselves. For the last seven years, there has been an increase in literature on the subject to assist schools with developing the most coherent and effective assessment models to be implemented in their settings. However, a general consensus on a standard assessment framework is yet to be reached.

Assessment

As mentioned in my previous study (Author 2021), assessment is a vast topic with lots of variation on national and international levels. It cannot be denied that assessment is the cornerstone to good teaching practice: 'it is assessment that brings together curriculum and assessment, and it is pedagogy which makes this take place' (Fautley & Daubney 2019:12). It is true that 'every kind of assessment can be valuable to teaching and learning' (Hetschke & Oliveria 1999:15). It is therefore imperative that, as teachers, we strive to create effective assessment methods to enable our pupils to learn better. A notion highlighted by Boud (2000) is that assessment should have a dual function in the education of a pupil. First, the assessment must meet the needs of the pupil in the present and the short terms without compromising the ability of pupils to meet their own future learning needs (Boud 2000:151). This means that assessment needs to allow pupils to understand their attainment in order to succeed and progress, whilst also arming pupils with the relevant skills they need to keep learning after secondary school. One of the most salient issues in the field of assessment is creating methodology that demonstrates validity and reliability, whilst also being manageable

and tailored to individual subjects and school settings. Black states that 'the concept of validity has been subjected to numerous definitions and differentiating elaborations' and that 'a broad concept of validity is both necessary and cogent in any attempt to improve the quality of assessments' (Black 1992:61-62).

Black and Dylan (2005) suggest that there are five separate factors to consider when conducting assessment in the classroom. The first being location; is the assessment being conducted inside or outside the classroom? The second – authority; who is assessing the pupil? The third – resources; what are the pupils allowed to have? The fourth – interactivity; can pupils seek clarification in this particular setting in order to improve? And finally, the fifth – scoring; is it objective or summative or somewhere in between? Is the assessment founded in formative judgements allowing for pupils to improve their work? Are the standards (or assessment criteria) determined by the 'community' (Black & Dylan 2005) so teachers can be perceived as the ally rather than the enemy? Each of these five considerations are key to the constructs of any assessment model and allow for schools to develop frameworks which are suited to their topic, their subject, their school and the National Curriculum, whilst maintaining validity and providing rationale for their decisions. Spruce states that assessment should organically come from the topics and skills being assessed, in order for the assessment model to be valid and truly reflect the nature of the knowledge or skill learnt (Spruce 2001:129). This suggests that assessment needs to be done whilst the activity is taking place in its natural state. For example, if a pupil had been taught various practical skills throughout a course of learning, the assessment of those skill should take place whilst those skills are being demonstrated, rather than through an arbitrary written test.

Government Guidance on Assessment

Government guidance on assessment for schools has excluded any detail on how to assess pupils outside public examinations which has led to a broad variety of frameworks and methods being used throughout the country. Whilst this provides schools with autonomy to make decisions about assessment within their own setting, it creates issues with standardisation. Furthermore, in government guidance, assessment is treated in the same way for all subjects without taking into consideration differences in content and skills which can vary substantially. As cited in Author (2021:13), 'the DfE [2013] broadly stipulated the content

to be taught but did not stipulate ways in which to assess knowledge, skills and understanding' allowing for all schools to develop and implement frameworks suitable to their individual settings. As also cited in Author (2021), further guidance on assessment for schools was published by the DfE (2014) which was on a generic multi-subject level. The focus in this document was highlighting the importance of assessment by utilising criteria free of bias, stripping away subjectivity and relying on criteria that was solely objective in its approach. The use of this kind of assessment model does not consider salient differences in subject content and the way each subject is taught which posed a problem for the nuances of the music curriculum and subsequent requirements of assessment. Despite the government giving schools the freedom to develop and implement curriculum and assessment frameworks, they stipulated the need for unbiased and objective assessment criteria across all subjects, which could be argued to be giving with one hand and taking with another. The lack of guidance from government regarding music curriculum was made worse by the abolishment of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as music curriculum studies became a 'neglected domain' (Fautley & Daubney 2019b:13).

In 2018, further guidance was provided, outlining what Ofsted inspectors were looking for in assessment models. As cited in Author (2021), the then National Director of Education, Sean Harford, stated that Ofsted were only interested in inspecting assessment models which 'work best' within specific educational settings (Harford 2018). This clarification is important for music teachers and curriculum leaders as it allows for them to develop curriculum and assessment frameworks which are best suited to their school but most importantly, to the subjects they teach.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment has seen an insurgence of interest in recent years. Encouragingly, Boud (2000) has noticed a shift in thinking towards the potential benefits of formative assessment in the classroom. The value of formative assessment is found to improve learning by identifying areas of success and improvement and providing pupils with ways in which to reflect and act upon their work to continue making progress. However, despite being 'in vogue' (Bennett 2011:5), it is suggested that formative assessment is something which can be confusing and unclear to all those involved in a pupil's education. How we define formative

assessment is not necessarily very clear due to teacher and pupil experiences in the classroom. Bennett states that 'existing definitions [of formative assessment] admit such a wide variety from one implementation and student population to the next' (Bennett 2011:5). This is not necessarily problematic unless different opinions on the matter cause a conflict of interest within a school. Valle also recognises the need for pupils to be active participants in the implementation of effective formative assessment, stating that 'feedback from formative assessment serves the purpose of helping teachers and students monitor learning and elucidate appropriate adjustments to the learning process' (Valle 2015:14). In other words, feedback and formative assessment provide a valuable opportunity for teachers and pupils to evaluate attainment and make informed decisions about how to progress. Indeed, Black and William conducted a study in 1998 in which they observed lessons, conducted teacher focus groups and interviews, and held informal interviews with pupils. From the findings of this study, Black states that 'there was a strong body of evidence to support a claim that formative assessment practises can raise standards' (Black 2003:7).

The literature states that it is important to establish how formative assessment frameworks are generated as they could be too generalised and run the risk of being invalid or lacking foundation. Criteria-referencing is not a new idea, but the literature suggests that its use in making formative judgements on attainment is more beneficial to pupil learning than assessing outcomes which they were historically used for in the NCLs. A large-scale study conducted by Chen et al. (2017) suggested that criteria-referenced formative assessment had a statistically significant, positive effect on students' arts achievements. Chen et al. go on to suggest that 'there is benefit in pupils engaging in the assessment process and knowing how pupils are going to move towards their goals' (Chen et al. 2017:301). The importance of pupils interacting with formative assessment is highlighted by Black (2003:8) when he states that 'unless some learning action follows from the outcomes, such practises are merely frequent summative assessment'. He suggests that for assessment to be effective, 'feedback should cause thinking to take place' (Black 2003:13) rather than simply being presented to the pupil.

Based on their extensive experience in the field, Fautley and Daubney suggest that 'music teachers have traditionally had strengths in formative assessment' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:10) as they are continuously making judgements about attainment and progress in their lessons. Arguably, this is true of all subject teachers in their individual settings, but their belief is that the nature of music pedagogy lends itself well to

this form of assessment. Chen et al. (2017:300) support this, stating that 'key elements of formative assessment are inherent to artistic practice'. Swanwick (1997) also supports this idea, suggesting that formative assessment of pupils is similar to the way in which we live our lives. He writes, 'we assess the speed of traffic when we cross the road, in conversation we assess when the right moment may have arrived to say what we really think... Assessment makes it possible for us to function' (Swanwick 1997:205). He goes on, asking 'if [formative] assessment is intuitively so much part of daily life, why's it that assessment in education - and especially in the arts - appears for some to be a sticking point?' (ibid.). As formative assessment sometimes demands more of teachers, perhaps there is a reluctance to do more given the pressures teachers face.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment, a term first used by Scriven (1967), is widely recognised as a necessity in education as it reports attainment and progress to those who need to know, such as SLTs. However, summative data can fail to reflect attainment reliably for various reasons. Summative assessment contrasts to formative assessment as it is 'much more concerned with grading than formative assessment is' (Fautley & Daubney 2019b:8). The distinction between the two different methods is important to recognise 'as the importance of everyday assessment is one which will make the most difference to pupils learning' (ibid.). They are suggesting that summative practices only satisfy auditing purposes rather than having a function in learning. Whilst auditing assessment is important, it is argued that teachers need to focus on the primary objective of teaching which is improving the learning, and therefore understanding, of their pupils. Black takes this idea further, stating that 'formative work can be undermined if pupils or teachers are worry[ing] too much about summative tests; such worry can lead them to focus entirely on practising for the tests and not on the good habits of learning which would in fact be best preparation for doing well in them' (Black 2009:195). This suggests that the importance placed on summative assessment could be detrimental to learning, further emphasising the importance of formative assessment on pupil outcomes. Boud (2000:156) states that summative assessment 'drives out learning at the same time it seeks to measure it'. Recognising the fact that the two must find a way to coexist, Black and William (2005:188) state that 'we must find ways of integrating formative and summative functions of assessment, but more work needs to be done in order to

fully understand the nature of the relationship between the two. If such integration is to be found, it certainly will not rest on a simple equation of external assessment for summative purposes on the one hand and classroom assessment for formative purposes on the other'. They suggest that both methods have their place in education, but teachers need to be clear about their function and how they can work together to positively impact pupil progress. According to Black (2003:21), the unfortunate reality of assessment is that teachers are caught in 'no-man's land' between new formative measures and often-contradictory demands of external testing systems which can stunt or block pupil progress. He goes on to state that 'those who, ignoring the evidence, impose increasing test pressures in the belief that these will improve learning, are closing down the known avenues to improvement and are frustrating the best efforts of teachers and damaging the self-esteem and motivation of children' (Black 2003:21) - a damning review. However, Black also suggests that, due to the way in which schools need to operate, summative tests are inevitable and teachers must learn to use them to their advantage. He states that pupils should have 'active involvement' in the summative testing process in order to be 'beneficiaries rather than victims of testing' (Black 2003:19). Therefore, it is important that school find a middle ground between the two assessment methods.

School Assessment Policy

The assessment policy developed, reviewed and implemented by my school must be adhered to by teachers across all subjects. It recognises the need for effective assessment methods to be used by teachers but it is, in parts, vague and places a lot of emphasis on summative assessment. However, the first page of the policy states that the main objective for assessment in the school is 'to provide a framework for monitoring and facilitating pupil progress' (School 2022:1) which suggests that there is some value placed on formative assessment. Later in the document, details are given about how summative assessments should be conducted by teachers. These include 'examinations', 'controlled assessments', 'personal investigations', and 'class tests' (ibid.). However, detail on formative assessment is far broader in scope and conflates formative and summative methods. It states that 'teachers are involved in the continuous formative assessment of pupils' progress during class activities, monitoring not only academic attainment but other skills such as co-operation and teamwork' (ibid.). If it is believed that formative assessment must include pupil action in order to direct progress in learning, then the previous citation describes a somewhat different process. It

could be argued that this is dressing summative assessment up as formative assessment by stating that it is a) regularly undertaken by teachers and b) assesses other skills outside of the core skills and knowledge of a curriculum. Both points are not necessarily formative despite being purported to be so by the policy. The policy also states that 'effective classroom dialogue, "open" questioning, communication of learning objectives and regular marking allow the teacher to assess pupil progress' (ibid.). Despite these more specific examples of formative assessment methods, the emphasis placed on monitoring pupil progress in a summative way far outweighs the emphasis placed on *how* a teacher may promote progress in a formative way.

The policy expands on the function and benefits of summative assessments, stating summative judgements 'will provide information, for both the teacher and pupil, about what the individual pupil can do without support. Such internal summative assessments inform the process of monitoring pupil progress in that the areas of strength and weakness are identified' (ibid.:2). It goes on to suggest that data collected from these assessments 'inform the individual pupil about how they can improve' (ibid.). These sections of policy suggest a level of independency on the part of the pupil to guide their own learning as a result of summative grades. An assessment of this nature may lose its effectiveness if a pupil is unsure about how to progress without guidance from their teacher.

A section of the policy under the heading 'The Key features of Assessment' (ibid.), details how teachers may use assessment on a daily basis, periodically (as determined by individual departments) and at formally defined points in the academic year. Within this section, there is a clause that states that 'pupils are given clear directions on how to move forwards and the strengths and weaknesses of their work' (ibid.). This is the first time the policy has detailed that formative assessment needs to include teacher input to facilitate progress in pupil learning. Yet, it does not mention how the teachers should give 'clear directions' (ibid.). Indeed, after this, there is no further mention of formative methods which suggests that formative assessment is not a school-wide priority.

Clarity of Assessment Practices for Pupils & Teachers

It is widely accepted that pupils should understand what they are learning and how to engage them by making learning more meaningful for them. Bruner states that there is a need for pupils to know why they are learning specific concepts or skills for effective learning to take place (Author 2021:5, Bruner 1999) thus suggesting that decisions made about assessment and curriculum need to be made transparent to teachers and pupils to facilitate the best pedagogical practices in the classroom. This is a notion supported by Philpott, who states that 'the most useful and effective criteria are those written by you as teacher in relation to what you, and your pupils, believe to be a successful outcome for a lesson or unit of work' (seen in Author 2021, Philpott 2007:220). Even if both parties do not agree on which criteria are the most successful, the idea that these criteria are made clear and explained to pupils in the first instance and throughout a course of study, is clearly important to effective teaching and learning. Claxton goes further to suggest that curriculum content and assessment methods used need to be fully explained to pupils 'instead of being a separate process of education reminiscent of stamping pupils along an educational manufacturing line' (Seen in Author 2021, Claxton 2009). Anderson (2019:343, seen in Author 2021) supports this idea, suggesting that 'curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment – they're all one, aren't they?'.

Formulating Assessment Criteria

There are various schools of thought on how assessment criteria should be generated. One of the biggest debates is whether criteria should be objective or subjective or strike a balance between the two based on what is being assessed (Author 2021). Scholars, such a Swanwick, oppose the idea of subjective assessment criteria in music, stating that it would invalidate 'the whole idea of education in the arts' (seen in Author 2021:8, Swanwick 1989:151). Swanwick also states that assessment criteria 'should indicate qualitative differences rather than quantitative shifts' (seen in Author 2021:8, Swanwick 1989:153). This means that assessment criteria should reflect progress from a quality standpoint, rather than being represented by an increase or decrease in a numerical value which could be seen as arbitrary and removed from the reality of the subject matter. Mills supports the idea that music should be assessed in a musical way stating that 'the point is that the [musical] assessment needs to fit the behaviour being assessed. A musical performance is not a mathematical problem' (seen in Author 2021, Mills 2005:17). Colwell also suggests that fairness in

assessment is vital to student engagement. They state that 'fair assessments increase student self-esteem because self-esteem is earned, not given by the teacher' Colwell 2004:16). Therefore, it is important to recognise assessment as a tool for engagement and potentially behaviour management too. However, there is a balance to be struck between assessment that is fair and too easy. Beran (2003) suggests that a 'dumbing down' of the curriculum and assessment processes lowers pupil self-esteem instead and keeps horizons low. It is therefore important for schools and teachers to tailor their assessment methods to their particular school setting, whilst ensuring that pupils are challenged and believe they can succeed.

Some teachers and scholars emphasise the need for criteria to be clear to enable successful evaluation and further learning to take place. Black (2003:14) suggests that criteria should be made 'transparent to pupils to enable them to have a clear overview, both of the aims of their work and of what it means to complete it successfully'. Black continues by stating that 'pupils should be encouraged to keep in mind the aims of their work and to assess their own progress to meet these aims as they proceed' (ibid.). Black is suggesting that creating assessment frameworks which have transparent assessment criteria (which are fully understood and continually revisited throughout a course of learning) have the potential to support pupils in becoming successful independent learners. The idea of independent learning is one shared by Boud (200:151), stating that assessment 'needs to be seen as an indispensable accompaniment to lifelong learning' which is something we as teachers are ultimately trying to instil in our pupils.

Values Reflected in Curriculum and Assessment.

The literature suggests that school values need to be clearly reflected in assessment criteria, in order for them to become meaningful for pupils. Boud (2000:160) states that assessment 'is an act of communication about what we value' as well as serving to examine success in a certain area. Knight (1988) suggests that what we value as educators directly influences what we teach and assess. He states that 'assessment is a moral activity. What we choose to assess and how, shows starkly what we value' (seen in Author 2021, Knight 1988:13). However, Spruce (2002:17, seen in Author 2021) indicates that is it is vital that assessment methods take other external processes into consideration to ensure validity, such as school-wide and national data collection. As individual departments are not the stakeholders in the assessment of a pupil, it

is important to recognise that data needs to be easily interpreted and, if necessary, converted into other formats. Hamilton (2002) supports this notion and also suggests that assessment models can directly affect 'ability identity' in the eyes of pupils, parents and teachers (seen in Author 2021). Ability identity is the notion that one is a high-, mid- or low-attainer in a certain subject which can have a positive or negative impact on perceived capabilities. For example, if a pupil attained 40% in an end of topic music exam, this may be lower in relation to other subjects, therefore negatively influencing the ability identity of the pupil in music.

Authenticity/Reliability of Assessment

Harlen and James argue that assessment is most reliable when it is 'not determined by one or two events, since to demonstrate understanding of a concept or skill it has to be applied in different contexts' (Seen in Author 2021, Harlen & James 1997:378). This is suggesting that a longer period of time and more than one assessment opportunity needs to happen in order to reliably assess understanding or a specific skill. James supports this notion by suggesting that assessment methods need to change to accommodate different learning theories and practices in the classroom (seen in Author 2021, James 2008). Alexander (2008) also suggests that a 'repertoire' of learning and assessment methods are vital (seen in Author 2021). The literature is suggesting that there is no consensus on what makes the best kind of assessment procedures when assessing music, rather teachers and schools need to utilise their experience and expertise to produce 'best fit' models. Harlen and James suggest that 'assessment is not an exact matter, can never be, and if we try to treat it as such, we may damage the very learning we are striving to bring about' (seen in Author 2021, Harlen & James 1997:378). Black (1992) agrees with this and goes further, suggesting that educational institutions play a major role in assessment models. He says that 'performance on a task depends on the nature of the task domain, and on the context, of institutional structures and roles, within which one decides that deployment of a particular skill is important' (seen in Author 2021, Black 1992:56). In order to ensure reliability within assessment models, Swanwick suggests that they have to 'take into account both dimensions, what pupils are *doing* and what they are *learning*' (Swanwick 1997:207). To only assess learning in isolation could render an assessment model unreliable if it does not take into consideration the very

nature of the learning activities undertaken by the pupil. However, it could be argued that models that do this could effectively standardise learning across different subject areas.

Music vs Whole-School and External Validation

External validation of musical assessment is crucial to standardise data across different subjects on a whole-school level. However, this can mean sets of highly objective assessment criteria are created in order to fulfil this requirement which renders the process arbitrary to the nature of the subject in question. Spruce (2002:18) suggests that assessment models which are entirely subjective in their criteria 'renders them unsuitable for any kind of external evaluation'. Fautley agrees with this idea, suggesting that the meaning of assessment is lost if you are too broad or subjective (seen in Author 2021, Fautley 2010). Anderson suggests that 'the requirement for music teachers to produce frequent data, uniformly across the subjects, facilitates an abbreviated curriculum, which resultantly impoverishes music curricula models' (Anderson 2019:375). This suggests that senior leaders and government cultivate environments in which summative assessment methods are prioritised over the benefits of formative assessment to learning. Edmund et al (2008) agree, stating that 'politicians are largely motivated by facts and figures' and have little interest in quality of learning or lack of it. Boud (2000:155) states that 'as a society we have become obsessed with certification and grading and public measures of performance and accountability'. Black (2009:200) is adamant that teachers and schools need to prioritise pupils learning over summative data despite various external pressures. It is important for us to recognise that assessment methods must adhere to these wider-school policies and priorities, whilst also facilitating formative methods whenever possible. In other words, a blended approach to assessment appears to be the most beneficial to all parties. However, Black also states that 'the potential of enhanced classroom assessment to raise standards will never be fully realised unless the regimes of assessment for the purposes of accountability and certification of pupils are radically reformed' (Black 2003:7). Therefore, it is on a whole-school level that reforms need to be made in order for learning potential to be fully realised.

The literature suggests that music teachers should be allowed to assess their subject how they see fit. Fautley suggests that a problem may be that music teachers are be scared of making broad, holistic judgements in their assessment as they could be 'derided by their colleagues' but concludes that 'surely it is for assessment

in music to be musical, rather than to aspire to some pseudo-scientific quasi-objectivity' (Seen in Author 2021, Fautley 2010:111). He makes it clear that it is important to consider the unique nature of music in its assessment and for teachers and senior leaders to understand this when comparing it to other subjects. Fisher (2008:3) supports this idea, stating that there should be recognition that music should be assessed differently to other subjects, like maths and science, based on how different the disciplines are. In my previous study, which analysed teacher perspectives on assessment methods in Key Stage 3 music (Author 2021), it was clear that music teachers preferred a balanced approach when it came to atomistic versus holistic and objective versus subjective assessment criteria. However, the data also suggested that some teachers leant towards different extremes for different areas of learning, such as composition and performance. From this, we can deduce that generating assessment criteria can be difficult and requires substantial knowledge of the subject in order to do this correctly.

Progression & Spiral Curriculum

When plotting pupil progression over the course of a term, a year, or a key stage, it is imperative to have a clear understanding about how the required skills and knowledge develop over that period for assessment to become an effective mechanism within the curriculum. By the same principle, Bruner (1960) developed the spiral curriculum which enables a named set of skills or dispositions to be learned and developed at different levels. It is a model which was developed further by Swanwick and Tillman (1986) to become a more subject-specific framework for music education. Swanwick suggests that the model has proven 'broad musical validity… across different activities' (Swanwick 2016:34). He explains that 'sustained research in Britain and overseas suggests that it is helpful to think of musical understanding in four layers. These are developed and revealed through the activities of making and appraising music (Swanwick 1979, Swanwick and Tillman 1986, Swanwick 1994). It is suggested that Swanwick and Tillman's (1986) model of music development represents, containing four layers of musical understanding, the 'first attempt to make some sense of coherence out of the rapidly growing body of literature on musical development' (Hetschke & Oliveria 1999:16). Importantly, the model allows for children to move freely between different vertical levels depending on their capabilities in different skills or activities. For example, a Year 7 pupil who is exceptional at composition may be attaining an expected level for a Year 9 pupil so the model will facilitate

that through carefully worded assessment criteria which can be graded. It also recognises that the pupil in question may not be at the same level for their singing or performance work. The notion that pupils progress in music in a linear way is negated by the model which demonstrates an awareness of the nature of the subject matter. An implementation study of Swanwick's model by Hentschke and Oliveria (1999:26) suggests there are positive benefits to using such a framework in identifying and developing a pupil's strengths and weaknesses in different skill and knowledge areas.

ISM Framework

A framework which embodies a lot of the key points and values from the literature above is one published by the Incorporate Society of Musicians (herein ISM) and developed by Martin Fautley and Alison Daubney (Fautley & Daubney 2019a). Fautley and Daubney took the work of Swanwick and Tillman and developed the spiral curriculum further still, concentrating on differentiating concepts and topics which could be visited and revisited throughout a course of learning – a practise claimed to be 'habitual' to music educators (Fautley & Daubney 2019b:14). The ISM's National Curriculum for Music is a contemporary curriculum and assessment framework which aims to help facilitate more meaningful music provision in Key Stage 3. It claims to be beneficial in several ways to improve teaching and learning of music in Key Stage 3 and is founded in the research and work of Bruner (1960, 1975), Swanwick and Tillman (Swanwick & Tillman 1986, Swanwick 1988). Due to reasons outlined in the upcoming methodology section, Section B of the framework was mainly utilised in this study ensuring that the focus of the intervention was on the assessment and progression components. As stated by Fautley and Daubney (2019b) 'modification is something we encourage' and that 'to be effective it will need to be tailored to suit local circumstances in your school' (Fautley & Daubney 2019b) as they recognise that each school is different in the way they plan and implement curricula and have to adhere to whole-school internal frameworks. As my school is particularly unique in that there are short terms and lesson times are 35 minutes long, tailoring of the framework was necessary for it to be successfully implemented.

The ISM framework is founded on the principal that 'composing, performing and listening are all key aspects of musical knowledge, skills, and understanding and the emphasis placed on these needs to remain

strong in all our classrooms' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a). The framework places emphasis on teaching and assessing music musically, building on and nurturing individual strengths and ensuring that pupils are included in the assessment process. The framework is split into two parts – A and B. Part A is the planning part of the framework which assists teachers in the planning of their curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. The flexibility of the framework allows for this part to be used for short-, mid- and long-term planning. Part B focusses on the assessment and progression of pupils in Key Stage 3 music. It provides teachers with exemplar assessment criteria for different skill areas, such as composing and performance, and enables them to differentiate learning and illustrate strengths and weaknesses for pupils.

Part B separates different sections of the NC into separate areas known as 'strands' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:13). From here, a selection of progressive assessment criteria is given in tables as examples of how pupils progress from seemingly simply outcomes in lower years to more advanced ones towards the end of the Key Stage. The framework suggests a three-point scale is used to grade whether pupils are working towards, working at or working beyond a specific criterion. The key to the assessment and progression section functioning as it should is generating '*one* statement in which outcomes are clearly differentiated by attainment level, *not* by writing separate outcome statements' (ibid.:14).

The framework claims that it is beneficial to pupils and for teachers as it utilises formative judgements 'on the hoof' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:17) as the primary source of assessment data, plotting pupil progress over time in specific areas and illustrating attainment and progress for pupils using radar charts. Radar charts (see Appendix 9) are a way of clearly illustrating attainment in different strands of the NC. As Appendix 9 shows, attainment in different topics can be layered over each other to demonstrate potential progression or regression in attainment. The creation and distribution of these radar charts at regular intervals throughout the course of Key Stage 3 removes the need for summative assessments. As discussed above, summative assessment are not always the best indicators of attainment, particularly in a multifaceted subject such as music. By following the framework in this way, 'all teachers then need to do is mark when they notice [evidence of attainment] taking place' (ibid.). The framework is based on teaching and assessing key skills and contents from the NC for Key Stage 3 music (DfE 2013a). However, it also encourages

curriculum planners to adapt and tailor the framework to suit individual school settings. This means that curriculum leaders can choose to use the entire framework or individual sections of it in isolation based on what suits their context and what they wish to prioritise. The flexibility of the framework stems from the recognition that each school has the potential to be different, both in the way the curriculum is constructed and the way they are run on a whole-school level (data collection points, curriculum priorities, termly reports etc.), allowing for the framework to be more practical and compatible with most schools.

The rise in literature supporting formative assessment suggests that this method is more beneficial to pupil learning than summative assessment. By raising the standards of learning and attainment, formative judgements of pupils in the classroom negates the need for summative assessments which can be arbitrary. However, as seen in my school policy, summative assessment is still the driving force in school assessment frameworks and teachers are expected to adhere to those policies regardless of their subject. As I discovered in my previous study, there are different schools of thought on what assessment criteria should assess in terms of objectivity and subjectivity. However, the role of the teacher and the school is to strike a balance between the two to ensure reliability and comparability with other subjects. The literature suggests that a framework like the ISM's would enable teachers to tailor a model to suit their school whilst targeting each skill area and basing summative assessment on formative judgements against gradable assessment criteria. Therefore, the ISM's framework is the basis for this study to see if it can bring about positive change to teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 music.

From the literature, the following research aims have been established for this implementation study.

1. To implement the new ISM framework in Key Stage 3 music which identifies different facets of musical learning and is grounded in formative judgements made by the teacher.
2. To review its success within my school.
3. To suggest improvements to the framework for my school and other teachers considering implementing the framework.

From these research aims the following research questions have been devised in relation to framework to be implemented in this study:

1. Has the framework made a difference to teaching and learning?
2. Has the framework been simple to implement?
3. Would it be worth pursuing the framework in the future?

Methodology of Study

Phase 1 (October – December 2021)

Initial Planning, Limitations and Modifications

In the Autumn term (2021), I analysed and adapted the framework to facilitate the scheme of work allocated and planned for the cohort taking part in the study. As discussed in the literature review, the framework is flexible and encourages practitioners to adapt the framework to suit the learning environment in which it is being used (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:20). As this study was being conducted in a relatively short period of time, from 1st January 2022 to 20th April 2022, certain components of the framework needed to be approached in a different way. Section A (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:1-8) is a curriculum planning framework which utilises the spiral model and helps teachers consider the best to approach to their curriculum and assessment methods. Following school policy, the curriculum and the topics included in it were decided upon in February 2021 ahead of the 2021-22 academic year. Therefore, for this study, Section A of the framework assisted in the analysis of the content and skills taught and assessed. It was not used to decide the appropriate content and skills (which would have been possible over a longer period). It also assisted us in developing appropriate assessment criteria, asking questions about which 'desired skills' and 'desired knowledge and understanding' we were seeking to develop in our curriculum (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:10). The other 'pillars' to Section A included identifying desired pedagogies within the curriculum and approaches required to develop knowledge and understanding further up the spiral. The former is a component of the curriculum which is set as teachers are required to follow the scheme of work and the

suggested learning tasks included therein. The latter would have only been possible if the study had taken place over a longer period, such as over an entire Key Stage.

On 10th November 2021, I chaired a departmental focus group to discuss the study and share ideas about the implantation of the framework in the Spring term. Members of the department acted as my primary collaborators but none more than the teacher assisting with phase 2 (herein Teacher X). The Year 7 cohort was split into five classes, of which I taught four and they taught one. The rationale behind hosting the focus group was to identify and discuss potential issues with the framework and ways in which I could tailor the framework further, as recommended by Fautley and Daubney (2019a:4). This was to establish rigour in phase 1 of the study and to lay the best possible foundations before the implementation of the framework in phase 2. The focus group was hosted by myself but also attended by three colleagues (The Head of Department and two Teachers of Music) all of whom teach classroom music to a variety of year groups. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed later that day. All attendees received a summary of the study including the aims, the method and potential benefits to teaching and learning. At this stage, the assessment criteria had not been finalised so I included screenshots of the sample assessment criteria taken from the framework document (Fautley & Daubney 2019). After a short explanation of the study and allowing for my colleagues to assess the framework and summary document, one of my colleagues questioned the grades by which each pupil is assessed in different key areas relevant to the topic (working towards, working at, working beyond). They said 'bearing in mind that some of our pupils are exceptional in specific areas… in performance for example, should there be an extra level to reflect that?'. This was something which the entire department agreed to include so, therefore, we included a 'mastery' level into our assessment levels, represented by the number 4 in yellow (see Appendix 7). This was to be used in only the most exceptional circumstances to recognise pupils who were working far beyond the expected level for their age group.

After this, I showed my colleagues a basic version of the mark book needed to keep track of pupil attainment in each of the different components being assessed. In this basic form, it was clear amongst those in the focus group that significant changes needed to be made in order to reflect the key skills which

were going to be assessed in the topic, particularly as it only ran for one school term. The table outlining Section A (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:10) proved useful in resolving this issue and produced meaningful assessment criteria from the key skills identified in the topic. Concerns were also raised over the added workload required from teachers implementing the framework, whilst also adhering to whole-school assessment procedures. According to Fautley and Daubney (2019a:3) the assessment and progression section is best used formatively "'on the hoof" as the normal lesson progresses' (ibid.:16). This is because they believe that 'musical learning is about thinking and acting *musically*' and 'learning *in* and *through* music' is important for valid and reliable assessment of musicality, rather than via arbitrary means such as written exams or one-off performances in front of peers (ibid.:3). Furthermore, this means of assessment is supposed to be less overbearing on teachers if used regularly and appropriately.

One of my colleagues questioned the use of the skill headings as found in the exemplar mark book and whether all the skills listed were going to be assessed in the topic. As the framework uses the National Curriculum as its foundation (DfE 2013), the skills listed in the exemplar were: singing; playing; improvising; composing; and critique and wider skills. Therefore, consideration needed to be given to what key skills and knowledge were being taught, learnt and assessed in the framework. This was something I needed to consider when drafting the assessment criteria, whilst carefully following the procedure in Section A of the framework (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:10).

After this, the Head of Department spoke of a 'real need' for such a framework to be implemented as there was a culture of pupils deeming themselves either good or bad at music on account of based purely on their performance experience and expertise. The whole department remarked on the variety of skills and knowledge needed to succeed in different areas of the SoW in question. This led onto a discussion regarding the drafting of the assessment criteria, used as an example in the framework (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:18), which are carefully constructed so that pupil attainment in multiple specific areas can be graded from one to three (working towards, working at and working beyond). This contrasts with other assessment methods which use assessment criteria as learning outcomes which can be simply achieved or not. The former allows for pupils to be assessed formatively in a multi-faceted way over time and generates a more in-depth picture

of individual attainment in different areas and facilitates visual progress made. This is in contrast with the latter which is done in a summative way and could be arbitrary to the skill or knowledge it set out to assess. At the end of the focus group, Teacher X and I agreed to meet and discuss the logistics of the framework in greater depth and decide upon suitable skill areas and assessment criteria ahead of phase 2.

Meetings with Teacher X

I believed that to establish rigour in phase 1 of the study, drafting, discussion and collaboration, and redrafting were vital. Therefore, Teacher X and I decided to meet and collaborate twice with a week separating the two meetings. As it was a busy time for us in the department and meeting times were scarce, it gave me chance to draft the skill areas, meet with Teacher X to discuss any potential changes that needed to be made and reflect on those criteria and make final adjustments in a second meeting ahead of implementation in phase 2. This method proved fruitful in generating usable assessment criteria that were suitable for implementation in phase 2.

The only changes made from the initial mark book were to the specific skill areas learnt during the Orchestral Landscapes topic. No decisions were made initially about desired skills as I wished to come to decisions about those as a team in the first meeting. This was to minimise any bias from what I prioritised as desired skills and to avoid influencing Teacher X's perspective in our first meeting. I identified four skill areas: performance; listening and appraising; musical literacy and critique and wider skills. During the first meeting with Teacher X, it was agreed that the skill areas would stay as they were as we deemed them appropriate and felt they were an honest reflection of the skills taught in the topic. To generate assessment criteria for each skill area, we posed the question 'What are the skills we aim to develop?' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:10). After discussing this for each skill area, we developed an initial set of criteria. However, looking at the mark book holistically, we were not confident on some of the criteria as we believed they may be difficult to assess over the course of one term. Teacher X and I highlighted these criteria for further consideration in our next meeting. We then planned to re-read the criteria and allow for further independent thought about them before our next meeting.

After a week, Teacher X and I met for the second time to finalise the assessment criteria. After reflecting on the desired skills and assessment criteria, we decided that we needed to streamline the criteria down further for them to become more meaningful to pupils and for the framework to be manageable from our perspective. Fautley and Daubney (2019a:16) state that 'you may wish to have more than two criterion statements, depending on your specific context. This is fine, but be aware of manageability'. Therefore, we decided to have two assessment criterion statements for each skill area which produced a more meaningful and less time-consuming mark book for us to use in phase 2.

Further Planning for Phase 2

In the second half of the meeting, we discussed final preparations to be made ahead of phase 2 in the following term. We decided on a format to make the framework accessible and meaningful for pupils in the Year 7 cohort. Firstly, we discussed how the pupils were going to actively take part in the study. We concluded that from a pupil's perspective, the framework only appears to affect the way in which they are assessed and encourages them to be part of the assessment process. Therefore, we decided that pupils would complete two questionnaires mostly comprised of Likert scaled questions; one at the start of phase 2, gaining insight to their experiences with learning and assessment thus far and a second at the end of phase 2, collecting data on opinions about the framework to see if it made any positive changes to pupil experience in music. The Likert scales used comprised of 5 points, each with a verbal label. This is because Schwartz *et al.* (1991:571) states that a scale with verbal labels is more effective in collecting reliable data than scales with numerical labels.

The limitation of this method is that you only receive quantitative data. Therefore, I also included an open, written question at the end of each questionnaire asking for pupils to submit any further comments or suggestions not covered in the questions before. All pupils involved in the study were reminded of their right to 'withdraw at any point without needing to provide and explanation' (BERA 2018:9). I believed it was best to have two lessons in the term where pupils were given their individual radar charts, visualising their attainment in different skills areas. We decided the first of these would be the final lesson before the February half-term and the second would be the final lesson before the Easter break. Teacher X and I also

decided that we should model the framework for the pupils. This would teach them how they would be assessed formatively using the assessment criteria and what their radar charts would potentially look like.

In order to answer the research questions stated above, I believed it was vital to take a mixed methods approach to the study. Therefore, I decided I would conduct five individual semi-structured pupil interviews with randomly selected Year 9 pupils who had studied music at the school from Year 7 to present. This was because to answer research question 1, 'Has it made a difference to teaching and learning?', and 3 'Would it be worth pursuing in the future?', I needed to gain a better appreciation for, and understanding of, how previous curriculum and assessment frameworks have been perceived by pupils to see if any positive change is made by the implementation of the ISM framework. The limitation of this method was the length of time that had elapsed since they studied music in Year 7 and 8. Therefore, I sent the questions to the interviewees a week before the interviews were scheduled for them to prepare if needed. These interviews were scheduled with interviewees throughout phase 2. Finally, it was decided that Teacher X and I would regularly collaborate and feedback to each other throughout phase 2 as well as having a formal semi-structured interview at the end phase 2. This was to maintain a productive and insightful dialogue between us and for me to note down important ideas and concerns into my field notebook. It also allowed me to directly address all four of the research questions from both perspectives. The interview was semi-structured, using the research questions, and transcribed with the permission of Teacher X.

Before the end of phase 1, I gained written consent from the Headteacher to allow for me to conduct the study during the Spring Term (See clause 11, BERA 2018:10). They were keen to know the results which would be summarised and fed back to them as well as the Music Department and published in the school educational research journal. Further ethical considerations taken included making sure the study was conducted in a way that did not bring pupils into any harm and did not negatively affect the education they would have normally received (BERA 2018:8).

Phase 2 (January – April 2021)

Introduction and Pupil Questionnaire 1

At the start of the term, pupils were introduced to the ISM framework and told that they would not be having a summative end of topic test as they usually would. However, they would be assessed formatively by their teacher who would record attainment 'when they notice it taking place' (Fautley & Daubney 2019a:16). They were also provided with a copy of the finalised assessment criteria in their OneNote, as seen below.

After being introduced to the framework, pupils were requested to take their first questionnaire asking them about their understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in music and if they have understood how their learning has progressed prior to this topic. This was completed using Microsoft Forms which can automatically and instantaneously anonymise data recorded. Pupils were told that their responses were anonymised and it was also their right to withdraw from the study at any time (BERA 2018:9). The purpose of this questionnaire was for me to gauge how pupils perceived their own attainment and progression in the subject before the implementation of the framework. Therefore, from this data, I would be able to see if there was any positive change to pupil perception by comparing the data from pupil questionnaire 2 which was completed at the end of phase 2. The limitation of asking pupils to complete a questionnaire like this in class is ensuring that they answer honestly and without being influenced by others or by what they believe they *should* be answering. Therefore, before the questionnaire, Teacher X and I assured our pupils that we wanted honest answers and there was no expectation for them answer in a certain way. The quantitative data was collected and made into a 100% stacked bar chart to clearly show the distribution of answers. The mean average to each question was also put through a standard deviation test to measure how dispersed the data was in relation to the mean. A higher number represents a wider distribution of results, and a lower number represents a narrower distribution of results from the mean average. Therefore, you can be more confident that an answer with a lower standard deviation score represents more of the sample.

Field Notes

During phase 2, I believed it was important to take notes of any thoughts, ideas and events that took place which could be valuable to the findings of the study. This included informal conversations been Teacher X and myself, how I felt during the implementation of the framework at different points throughout the study and observations I made during my lessons. This qualitative data was reviewed and added value to findings recorded in other areas of the study. Thoughts produced during the study could be easily lost when trying to recall them in the future. It also added another level of reliability to the data collected.

Half-Term Radar Chart and Self-Evaluation

Before the half-term break in February (the halfway point in this study), Teacher X and I made sure that all the pupils were assessed in line with the framework and the spreadsheet generated in phase 1. Each skill area generated an average score from each individual assessment criterion. For example, if a pupil attained a 2 in one assessment criterion and a 3 in another, the average would be 2.5. The spreadsheet was formatted to round up from this so the generated average would be 3. Whilst not ideal as this potentially augments attainment, Teacher X and I believed that a decimal would detract from the meaningfulness of the mark given and it would be difficult to quantify a half-way point between working at and working beyond expected levels. We therefore decided in phase 1 that this was the best option for the study. It was also decided that the pupils would receive their first radar chart during the first lesson back after half-term in order for it to be more useful to them in the second half-term. Giving pupils the radar charts before half-term would have meant a three-week gap between that and their next lesson, by which time, it was believed that pupils would have forgotten their attainment and the potential effectiveness of the framework would have been negatively impacted. Using the distribution tool on Microsoft OneNote 10, pupils received their individual radar charts, accompanied by a table explaining the attainment levels for each skill area, a copy of the assessment criteria in relation to each skill area (See Appendix 3) and a section to complete a self-assessment on their attainment and progress. Pupils were given 15 minutes of the first lesson back to analyse their radar chart, look over the assessment criteria and then complete the 'Self-Assessment to Progress' section on their OneNote. Formative assessment is only meaningful when pupils take the time to respond to feedback to help their learning. Teacher X and I encouraged pupils to use the assessment criteria in their

response to the radar chart (as seen in image 6 where the pupils have utilised the wording of the assessment criteria to identify their focus).

End of term radar chart and pupil questionnaire

In the final lesson of term, pupils were provided with another radar chart illustrating their individual attainment in each skill area. The chart was provided in the same OneNote section as the previous one so they could be easily compared by the pupils. Therefore, pupils would be able to clearly see any progress made. After comparing the two radar charts, pupils were invited to complete a questionnaire which asked their opinions about the framework. It was a combination of Likert scale question and short answer questions. These questions were created during phase 1 of the study and checked by Teacher X to ensure reliability and relevance to the research questions. One of the benefits of this research method was that pupils were able to quickly complete questions about the framework whilst referring to the radar charts and other salient parts of the curriculum and assessment framework on OneNote. However, this format is limited by the scope of the questions asked. The use of Likert scale questions would generate measurable data but would not allow for pupils to expand on their answers facilitating more valuable data collection. Therefore, the decision was made in phase 1 to include open questions to allow for pupils to generate qualitative data pertinent to the research questions relating to the framework. This questionnaire was completed on a Microsoft Form and pupils were anonymised adhering with BERA guidelines.

Standardised Open-Ended Pupil Interviews

As mentioned previously, in order to gain a better understanding of pupil perceptions of the current curriculum at Key Stage 3, I interviewed five Year 9 pupils who were randomly selected from a group of pupils who had attended the school since the start of Year 7. The interviews were conducted throughout phase 2 of the study and I used domain analysis to detect themes in the transcripts which could be beneficial to answering the research questions. I decided that a standardised open-ended interview would be most appropriate for this as I was directly answering predetermined research questions and I knew what I wanted to ask the pupils specifically about their experiences. It also allowed for me to 'increase comparability' between interviewees and process the data in a more organised fashion (Cohen et al. 2013:413). The

weaknesses of this kind of interview technique are: there is little flexibility regarding changing questioning for different pupils if needed due to various circumstances. Also, the wording of the questions may impact the 'naturalness' of delivery and may make pupil feel under pressure to answer in a certain way (ibid.). In order to minimise the weaknesses posed by the interview format, I made sure that follow up questions were used when needed to help pupils elaborate on their answers and think about the questions in different ways. The questions used in these interviews were:

- What are your thoughts on the music curriculum in Remove and Lower IV (Year 7 and Year 8)?
- How could it have been improved in your eyes?
- What were your strengths in Remove and Lower IV music? How did you know?
- How did you know you were progressing in Remove and Lower IV music?
- What are your opinions on the way you were assessed in music?
- Is there anything else you would like to talk about which we have not covered?

According to Maxwell (2005:93), it was appropriate for me to create an atmosphere which suited the setting. For example, pupils are not used to having formal interviews with a teacher, so I ensured that I made pupils feel at ease and reminded them that I wanted honesty and was not trying to trick them in anyway or only expecting positive answers. However, it is important to recognise that pupils may have still felt uneasy despite my efforts.

Standardised Open-Ended Teacher Interview

In order to gain a better insight into the implementation of the study from Teacher X's perspective, it was important to host an interview with Teacher X at the end of phase 2. I decided that it would take place at the end of phase 2 as the implementation of the framework would still be fresh in our minds, allowing us to recall accurately salient information and personal thoughts to ensure validity of the data. The four research questions provided the foundation to the questions posed in the interview. In order to collect as much useful data as possible, I believe it was important to make this interview standardised and open-ended to directly answer the research questions. This also allowed me to ask supplementary questions to further

clarify and/or develop answers if needed. Furthermore, it also enabled for me to share my insights and thoughts as I was implementing the framework at the same time as Teacher X. The interview questions were drafted and redrafted to create reliable questions to directly answer the research questions. I believe it is important to consider that I may have brought in my own bias when answering and contributing to questions posed. However, as I was implementing the framework too, it was important that my views were expressed in the interview which was recorded in the transcript facilitated small discussions during the interview. Using the standardised open-ended questions kept the interview on track if the discussion took a tangent.

Phase 3 (May – July 2021)

Analysis of data

Once all the data had been collected, I analysed the data, in order to answer the research questions one and three. Qualitative data from the pupil questionnaires needed to be made into suitable graphs. The data from questions which used Likert Scales were converted into 100% stacked bar charts to see how the cohort voted for each question and what the majority of pupils voted for. After creating visual representations of the data, I employed the standard deviation statistical test to determine the proportion of pupils voting for the mean average result. Higher standard deviation scores would suggest a great spread of answers compared to average which can help with determining differences in opinion across a sample. A sizeable quantity of qualitative data was generated from the questions that featured in the pupil questionnaires and pupil and teacher interviews which needed to be analysed. According to Cohen (2013:566), the most appropriate way of analysing this data was using domain analysis to detect themes and significant terms of phrases used in responses. As the study was determining pupil and teacher perceptions of the study, I was not searching for pre-determined phrases or words in the data. Rather, I was seeing if I could group data in thematic groups. In order to do this, I uploaded the qualitative data and transcripts to NVIVO where I could create codes and tag sections data as necessary. Cohen states that researchers should 'read and re-read the data to become thoroughly familiar with them, noting also any interesting patterns, any surprising, puzzling or unexpected features, any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions… before beginning the coding process' (Cohen et al. 2013:565-566). Therefore, I made sure that I re-read the data multiple times

in order to become familiar with the it and note any themes. I was conscious that creating codes and detecting themes in the analysis could be steered by my own bias. Cohen states that 'one has to be careful for the codes and nodes not to steer the research and its findings. The danger of using codes and categories is to predefine the data analysis' (Cohen et al. 2013:566-567). I used Microsoft Word to transcribe the interviews and then, once the interviews had concluded, I went through the transcriptions to make sure the software had transcribed the conversation accurately, making edits as necessary. A significant benefit to this analysis was that themes were easily detectable and grouped using the software. I was able to take the vast amounts of data generated from the questionnaires and interviews and make qualitative judgements about it in order to gain insight about the success of the framework. However, this method of analysis was limited by the amount of time it took to complete. Due to having to so much data, it proved time consuming re-reading the data and trying to make balanced, unbiased decisions about how data could be thematically coded or not. It needed to be done in stages in order for it to be reliably analysed and coded.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study, I have closely adhered to the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research produced by BERA (2018). Further to that, I gained ethical approval of my study from the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) and written consent to undertake my study by the Headteacher of the school. As I am already a teacher in the school, written consent was only needed from the Headteacher for the study to take place. For all participants, I ensured that data was stored securely and was fully anonymised (BERA 2018:21) and for the interviewees, I ensured participants were not identifiable by employing pseudonyms. All data was stored on a private university OneDrive. For Teacher X, I gained their verbal consent to use their data in the study prior to phase 1. Further to that verbal agreement, I ensured that Teacher X understood that they could 'withdraw at any point without needing to provide an explanation' for their withdrawal (BERA 2018:9). As the study was taking place during the normal school hours, I was very aware that the study should not negatively impact the wellbeing or learning of the pupil participants (both the Year 7 cohort and the selected Year 9 interviewees), (BERA 2018:8). I undertook the research in way that was appropriate for the pupil participants too (ibid.). As with Teacher X, all participants in the study were told they could withdraw from the study at any time. Following this study, data will be

destroyed in line with government regulations (Data Protection Act 2018).

Findings and Discussion

Has the framework made a difference to teaching and learning?

Creating a Comparison Point - Comparing Pupil Questionnaire Data

Following this study, this research question has a more complex and nuanced answer than a simple yes or no answer, which was to be expected. Firstly, in order to establish a clear comparison point to gauge the success of the study from the pupils' perspective, question one of the first pupil questionnaire at the start of the Lent Term stated, 'Before the Orchestral Landscapes topic [the topic taught over the Lent term], you have understood your strengths and weaknesses in music'. The pupils were required to answer using a Likert scale from 1 - 5 (see Appendix 1) which corresponded to their potential opinions on a given statement or question. On this particular question, answers generated a mean average of 3.72 and with a Standard Deviation score (herein SDS) of 11.09. This suggests that there was a reasonable spread of answers from the mean which suggested that most pupils agreed with the statement. The statement in question two stated that pupils understood how their learning has progressed in music. Again, pupils answered using the same Likert scale to express how strongly they agreed with that statement, and this generated another mean average of 3.72 and an SDS of 11.50. The small difference in SDS is insignificant when analysing the data and the average has remained the same which suggests either that most pupils felt the same about both statements and they were unable to differentiate between each statement. If the latter is true, this raises questions over whether pupils at this age are equipped to be answering such reflective questions. Assuming pupils did interpret the statements as they were intended and answered honestly, this questionnaire shows that pupils generally agree with the two statements suggesting they know how what their strengths and weaknesses in music are and they know how they progress in the subject. However, a high proportion of pupils (31.3%) answered either neutral or disagree which suggests that there are improvements to be made in ensuring clarity of strengths and weaknesses and their progression.

Creating a Comparison Point - Individual Pupil Questionnaires

In order to gain further insight into the opinions of pupils who had been through most of Key Stage 3 music at the school, the individual pupil questionnaires generated a lot of qualitative data which was analysed using 'domain analysis' (Cohen et al. 2013:566) to detect themes and generate relevant codes. In these interviews, pupils were asked about their experiences in music in Year 7 and 8. I posed a variety of open and more direct questions to gain a better insight into their experiences in the classroom and to see whether pupil learning could benefit from the implementation of this assessment framework. My first observation from the data was how difficult pupils found it to express their views on assessment. Despite having received the questions in advance, pupils tended to discuss content rather than assessment. When creating the interview questions, this was not an obstacle I anticipated so therefore, when required, I added follow up questions if a pupil did not necessarily answer the initial question posed. This, in itself, suggests that pupils struggle to differentiate content and assessment which, whilst inextricably linked, are two separate elements of pedagogy and should be made clearer by teachers in the minds of their pupils. A limitation of this data collection method was the limited sample size. With five pupils representing around 56 pupils in the year group, it would be fair to question whether their opinions would be a true reflection of all opinions in the year group. However, the overriding positive to this method was the sheer quantity of valuable data generated from the process.

A key theme was the pupil's perception of progress; that is, how they knew or did not know how they were progressing in the subject. All pupils expressed that they were making progress in music and that they received feedback from their teachers. However, most pupils failed to evidence specific explanations besides consequential learning outcomes. For example, once asked 'How did you know you were progressing in Remove [Year 7] and Lower IV [Year 8] music?', Pupil B at first was 'not sure' but after a long pause, said 'maybe because our work was getting better and… like our compositions were improving'. Pupil E simply stated, 'I mean some of it I didn't know, and I knew that I was learning because I didn't know it already'. From these responses, it was indicating that pupils were struggling to expand on how they knew they were progressing, and they were unsure of how progress was being assessed and fed back to them from the teacher. However, Pupil D was able to detail some of their experiences, stating 'we were

always given back a lot of feedback which highlighted exactly what we'd done well and what we needed to improve on' and 'I could always ask [my] music teachers what specifically we needed to do in order to improve'. From the evidence, it could be argued that despite at least some pupils being given feedback on their progress in music, there needs to be more clarity in its delivery in order for pupils to fully understand and be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, this indicates that the framework implemented in this study would be beneficial to pupil learning.

When pupils were asked 'What were your strengths in Remove and Lower IV music? How did you know?', four of the five pupils expressed an intrinsic identification of strengths based on how easy they found the work and how much previous knowledge they used throughout the schemes of work. For example, Pupil C indicated they relied on their strong theory knowledge, learnt for an external exam, to complete work which would have been harder otherwise. Pupil E's response was similar, stating 'personally I found [music theory] quite easy and I think [that was] because I already had a strong understanding of that because I have been involved in various musical groups'. Furthermore, Pupil A said that they believed they were stronger at certain parts of the curriculum 'because I played the harp, piano and guitar all at the same time.' The use of previously learnt skills and knowledge is to be expected in most subjects, including music, and is clearly evidenced by these responses. Pupils were able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses by how they felt and by how easy or hard learning tasks were. However, the noticeable absence of responses relating to how they were told or shown their strengths and weaknesses by their teacher is interesting. Indeed, none of the pupils used numerical scores or grades as a descriptor of perceived success, despite the fact that the summative assessment framework employed by the school is the main mode of assessment and uses such grading systems. The evidence suggests that pupils have a strong idea about their strengths and weaknesses, but the validation of those feelings is based on their previous experiences rather than anything given or shown to them by their teacher. Not only does it suggest that the school-wide assessment framework is not meaningful to pupils, at least from musical standpoint, it also suggests that music teachers are not doing enough to make strengths and weaknesses transparent to pupil to facilitate progress. The need for a framework to be employed which cogently and transparently illustrates strengths and weaknesses would clearly benefit pupil learning in this way.

Another trend from the data following the same question, was how pupils perceived assessment criteria and how it can be erratic in its clarity and usefulness. Pupil E stated that 'I didn't really know exactly what was wanted of me… and how I could fulfil the requirements that were needed'. Pupil B said 'No idea. Really no idea'. Some pupils had a vague idea about the assessment criteria but as recorded in my field notes, 'their responses to this question were not convincing by any means'. The evidence points to the possibility that teachers were scarcely using, or not using at all, assessment criteria when explaining the purpose and outcomes of assessment to their pupils. It would be fair to assume that if assessment criteria were communicated to pupils more clearly, it would be highly beneficial to pupil learning in this instance.

Answering Research Question 1 – Standardised Open-Ended Teacher Interview

With the data collected and analysed from the first pupil questionnaire and the individual pupil questionnaires, a clearer picture formed about the current music provision in my school and how that was being perceived by pupils. The standardised open-ended teacher interview took place at the end of the main study implementation period and the aim was to collect qualitative data on the teacher perspectives of the framework by basing questions on the research questions. As with the transcripts from the individual pupil interviews, I used domain analysis on the transcript to detect themes and code data appropriately. Regarding the first research question, the interview with Teacher X at the end of Phase 2 provided some evidence to suggest there were some benefits of using the framework during the implementation period. The following quotes capture the essence of the responses from Teacher X regarding benefits of the framework for pupil learning:

'I think there were benefits in the sense that it drew attention, from the children's point of view, it drew [pupils'] attention to alternative ways of assessment.'

'I think that it gave confidence to those [pupils] who weren't top performers or top achievers… I think it [the framework] has the potential to have positive ripple effects.'

These responses drew upon evidence seen in lessons and work completed by pupils in Teacher X's class. From my perspective, I also observed similarly positive pupil perceptions of the framework in this way. There were eleven pupils in my Year 7 classes who did not play an instrument or sing but their strengths and weaknesses were clearly illustrated by the radar charts. As noted in my field notes after the half-term radar chart was issued, 'some pupils appeared pleasantly surprised by their attainment in different areas and one pupil was heard saying "I didn't think I was good at music"'. However, there was also evidence to suggest that parts of the framework did not benefit pupil learning but were possibly a hindrance. Teacher X suggested that 'language in the framework' was not particularly clear for pupils to understand. Teacher X went on to say 'I think one of the things that popped up with the kids with the clarity of the radar charts when reading it and not understanding quite how it worked'. This suggests that improvements could be made to the clarity of the radar charts generated and distributed to pupils at half-term and at the end of term. Although, if pupils were exposed to this framework over a longer period, they would become more familiar with it.

Teacher X alluded to the framework not complimenting the whole-school assessment framework and potentially causing confusion. As discussed in the literature review, formative assessment has a huge number of potential benefits to pupil learning (Boud 2000, Bennett 2011, Valle 2015, Black and William 1998, Black 2003, Chen et al. 2017, Swanwick 1997, Fautley & Daubney 2019a), but it may be appropriate to draw a correlation between the lack of formative assessment being undertaken elsewhere in the school (School 2022) and pupil confusion with the framework which was based on formative judgements. Teacher X says the pupils are 'not used to the idea that there are multiple ways of assessing music' and that the only way assessment occurs is through summative whole-school frameworks which occurred periodically during the implementation phase.

With the exception of two pupils who left the school during the course of phase 2, the evidence from the joint mark book spreadsheet shows that every pupil made progress under at least one assessment criterion. However, this progress was not necessarily reflected in the radar chart layout. For example, in the first half-term, one pupil attained 'working beyond' for 'aurally recognising musical devices' but 'working at' for 'uses

elements of music in analysis of music'. This generated an average of 2.5 but this was rounded to three which equated to 'working beyond' for the skill area of 'listening and appraising'. Teacher X and I believed that decimals would add confusion to what the grading system really meant as the numerical grades directly corresponded to written descriptors – we were reluctant to generate sub-levels similar to those used during the time of the NCLs. It was observed in class by Teacher X and me that pupils were sometimes confused about why their radar chart had not changed despite being told they had improved under a specific assessment criterion. I believe an opportunity was missed to demonstrate to pupils that they had made progress despite it not being illustrated by the radar charts. Nevertheless, both Teacher X and I believed that the data recorded about pupil attainment and progress helped us tailor task differentiation better and easily identify pupils who excelled in different skill areas who possibly would have otherwise gone unnoticed if only using the school assessment framework.

The second pupil questionnaire, distributed at the end of phase 2, contained a selection of other Likert scale questions where pupils needed to respond to a statement. This generated valuable quantitative data which was analysed in the same way as the first questionnaire by working out the mean average and the SDS for each question to gain insight into the range of answers given by the cohort. Question 1 read 'Radar charts have clarified your strengths and weaknesses in music this term'. Like the first questionnaire, the Likert scale was 1-5 with pupils answering 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree (See Appendix 2). The average response to this question was 3.92 with an SDS of 11.09. 81.3% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed with this statement whereas only 18.8% were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Despite a relatively high SDS, this data suggests that the use of radar charts for this purpose was mostly positive and impacted positively on pupil learning in a significant way. Some responses from the same questionnaire suggested that the radar charts helped pupils in their understanding of their musical capabilities. Responding to the question 'What have you found most useful about using radar charts in music?', 31 pupils responded with answers relating to how the radar charts helped them see their strengths and weaknesses and/or their progression. The use of the term 'see' is important as it suggests that, from the pupils' perspective, the illustrative nature of this framework had a positive impact on their learning, which is supported by Fautley and Daubney's findings (2019a).

Further evidencing the benefits of the framework for pupil learning, when asked to respond to the statement 'Talking about assessment and progression with your music teach has helped you understand what you learn in music', 72.9% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed. Only 22.9% were neutral and 4.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This evidence is suggesting that explicitly speaking to pupils about their assessment, how they are assessed and how they progress helps pupil learning, at least from their perspective. It could be assumed that enabling pupils in this way could have positive effects on their learning and sense of achievement.

Has the framework been simple to implement?

Staff Well-Being

The radar charts were generated using Microsoft Excel and each one took around a minute to complete using the numerical data from the joint mark book spreadsheet. With 49 pupils in the year, this would add up just under five hours of additional work for teachers if this style of framework was pursued for an entire academic year. However, completing this, whilst also having to adhere to the whole-school assessment framework, proved to be concerning to Teacher X (as noted in their responses during the interview). Teacher X stated 'I think what struck me [during phase 2] was that as we were doing it alongside the school reporting system, it was too much. I think there are two issues here; one being that the framework was so condensed into one term and, two, we were doing it at the same time as normal school reporting periods'. The expectation to implement this framework, as well as adhering to the whole-school framework, appeared to be too labour-intensive for Teacher X. I would also agree that implementing the framework would not be sustainable across longer periods of time and across multiple year groups for similar reasons. Further to this, Teacher X remarked on their apprehension about assessing every child against all the assessment criteria twice throughout the course of the term. They said 'I just see a scary spreadsheet. I haven't had the time or the space… the mental space to look at it and evaluate pupils progress from it properly'. They referred to the spreadsheet as a 'wall of data' which from their perspective was rather intimidating. Their apprehension is further augmented by the limited amount of time we had to deliver the scheme of work which was due to historic content planning, term times and unforeseen school events which inevitably

happen throughout the school year. Either the grading system would have to be simplified or the whole-school framework would have to become more flexible in order to accommodate the assessment framework used in this study when assessing pupils in music.

Whole-School Restrictions

A significant obstacle faced by myself and Teacher X was the limited amount of time we had to deliver content and implement the framework. Year 7s only had 35 minute lessons which restricted the implementation of the framework to a few minutes in the specified lesson which, as recorded in my field notes, 'felt rushed and I am not sure if all pupils are understanding the purpose of this'. Teacher X also stated in the teacher interview that 'it felt like it [the framework] was a bit shoe-horned in' and they believed that a key issue in its implementation was that 'the framework was [too] condensed into one term'. As a result of this time restriction, which was underestimated in phase 1, we were unable to deliver part of the scheme of work which encompassed the skill area critique and wider skills. Within this skill area, there were two assessment criteria which were not covered and therefore pupils were not assessed on them. This narrowed the breadth of skills and knowledge being assessed which resulted in three-sided radar charts instead of four. The radar chart was useful in clarifying that this area of assessment had been missed and could perhaps be used as evidence to support the impact on pupil learning when lessons are so short. However, it would also suggest that the intended amount of assessment was unrealistic in the short time frame of phase 2 and that extending the assessment to four different skill areas would not have been attainable or beneficial to teaching and learning within this time frame.

Question 2 in the second pupil questionnaire stated 'You have found it difficult to understand your strengths and weaknesses in music using the radar charts'. The response for this question was also encouraging with the mean average being 2.33 and the SDS being 10.65. Only one pupil (2%) agreed with this statement with 35.4% saying they were neutral and 62.5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This data suggests that most pupils understood the radar charts and had a clear idea about their attainment and their progress by the end of the term. This suggestion is supported by the data from question 3 which asked pupils for their opinions on how the radar charts could have been improved. Most responses commented

on the need for the radar charts to be clearer as they were confusing to read. Four pupils who commented on the radar charts being confusing included 'at first' or similar terminology in their response: 'They are slightly confusing at first', 'It's a bit confusing to read at first', 'At first it is a bit confusing to read but as you use it more the more you know how to read it'. The evidence here is suggesting that the initial introduction of the radar charts at the start of phase 2 and at half-term caused confusion for pupil who had not used this method of assessment before. However, as pupils got more used to using the radar charts, it became easier to understand. It is also important to consider that some pupils may not have answered honestly as to please their teacher and vice versa.

Would it be worth pursuing the framework the future?

We can compare the data between the first and second pupil questionnaires to see if there is evidence to suggest that it would be beneficial to pursue the framework in the future. The data from the first questionnaire suggests that there was a proportion of pupils (31.9%) who were either neutral or did not understand their strengths and weaknesses in music prior to the framework being implemented. Further to this, 34% of pupils were also neutral or did not understand how their learning progressed in music in music prior to phase 2. When compare this data, it could be argued that there was a requirement for a framework that clearly illustrated and explained to pupils their attainment in music which encompasses each area of the curriculum. The data suggests that the framework successfully illustrated attainment and progression to most pupils which supports the notion of pursuing the framework for future Year 7 cohorts, as well as other year groups in Key Stage 3.

Question 6 of the second pupil questionnaire stated 'You would like to use radar charts in future topic'. Similar to other questions of this type, I created a Likert scale for pupils to use in their responses. The purpose of this question was to gauge whether the pupils themselves believed the framework would be beneficial to their learning in the future, thus demonstrating the perceived value of the framework. A mean average of 3.69 suggests that there was a neutral to positive agreement with that statement which, whilst promising, is not overwhelmingly in favour of the framework. The SDS was 8.11 which suggests a relatively narrow spread of answers from the mean score. From this data, it would be fair to suggest that a high

proportion of pupils were either impartial or liked the idea of using radar charts in future music lessons. This mean average mark may have been higher if pupils were exposed to the framework for a longer period of time, which would provide them with a solid foundation for interpreting and utilising the charts.

At the end of the each of the individual pupil interviews, I explained the reason behind conducting the interviews with them. Following the explanation of the framework, I asked each pupil whether they believed it would have benefited their learning in Year 7 and 8 and they all said it would have been beneficial. Pupil D remarked 'that would have been so useful… I might have seen if I was any good at appraising or something like that'. Again, they used the word 'seen' emphasising the significance of the illustration of attainment and progression which the framework is based on.

Teacher X suggested a number of ways in which the framework could be adapted in order for it to be a viable framework to pursue in the future. They said it would be beneficial for teachers and pupils if the framework took place over 'the course of one, two or three years, even'. In this way, the framework would be manageable as far as workload was concerned as teachers would have more time to generate formative assessment data and pupil progress would more noticeable if taken over a long period of time. Teacher X continued by saying 'spreading it [the framework] over a long period of time would also give us a bit more scope with assessing different key [skill] areas'. Teacher X also suggested the possibility of getting pupils to colour the radar charts to assist with teacher workload whilst making pupils more engaged with the assessment process. These suggestions would make the framework more meaningful and manageable which were both issues raised by the preceding data. Lastly, Teacher X suggested that utilising vocabulary from GCSE and A-Level music in the assessment criteria would benefit learning and could facilitate a smoother transition between Key Stages 3 and 4.

Conclusions and Implications

It would be fair to suggest that the implementation study was successful in parts but not in others. From the literature, it was clear that there is a demand for curriculum and assessment models which can be tailored to suit individual schools, highlight the different skill areas learnt and are founded in formative assessment. The ISM framework is a relatively new publication which tried to do just that.

Has the framework made a difference to teaching and learning?

I believe that the framework made positive changes to teaching and learning. Before the study, a proportion of pupils were unsure of their strengths, weaknesses or how they could progress in music. Furthermore, pupils in Year 9 suggested that they relied heavily on intrinsic validation of attainment and progression. Teacher X and I observed the benefits to learning as a result of the framework. This included observing progression on the shared mark book and pupils being able to see their own progress in each area assessed on the radar charts and in the individual scores. Also, the framework served to highlight pupil strengths and weaknesses in different areas of the subject which may have been otherwise undetected if relying solely on a summative assessment method. Indeed, it drew the attention of pupils to alternative ways of assessment outside of the school framework which overly relies on summative methods which I believe was positive. Furthermore, it also enabled pupils to visually see their attainment and progress which seemed to have a positive impact on morale and pupil self-perception of their own attainment level in music. These points suggest that the framework has made positive differences to teaching and learning.

Has the framework been simple to implement?

Despite the positive changes made to teaching and learning, implementing the framework within my setting has been very challenging. First, pupils found the language of the assessment criteria hard to understand. Not enough thought was given to how pupils were going to understand the terminology used which led to confusion amongst the cohort. Second, the radar charts were complex and pupils struggled to understand them in the first instance. However, their familiarity had noticeable increased when the second radar charts were distributed. In order to address this issue, the department would have to consider embedding the framework throughout the year or key stage for pupils to get used to them and for it to become the norm.

For instance, a pupil experiencing this framework from the start of Year 7 would be very used to interpreting and responding to radar charts by the time they reached the end of the year, or even the key stage. However, it is evident that the lack of pupil understanding added complexity to the implementation of this framework within the time frame of the study.

Additionally, the framework and the whole-school assessment model did not necessarily complement each other from the teachers' perspectives. Running this framework alongside pre-existing assessment methods required by many schools across every department, created a vast amount of additional work for teachers that may not be sustainable in the long term. Indeed, Teacher X stated their apprehension over pursuing the framework without making significant adaptations and that is understandable. However, if relevant changes were to be made to the framework and if departments were granted the freedom to pursue this assessment framework instead of the standard summative assessment grades required by many schools, the benefits to pupil learning and progress may outweigh the concerns surrounding increased workload from a teaching perspective. Furthermore, if the benefits to teaching and learning were observed by senior leaders, perhaps whole-school frameworks may be more accommodating to the nuances of individual subjects which do not fit the 'one-size-fits-all' assessment model currently in place.

Would it be worth pursuing the framework in the future?

As far as teaching and learning is concerned, the framework would be worth pursuing in the future. However, it would need to be adapted further to make it a viable option, particularly in the context of a larger school. Whilst the sample of Year 9 pupils was small, their responses were overwhelmingly positive when presented with the overview of the framework. The visual aspect was appealing to pupils and they could see the potential of how it could support their own progress. However, in order to make it accessible in the first instance, particularly to younger pupils, some adaptations would need to be made. First, the language used in the assessment criteria would need to be simplified to make it more age-appropriate for younger year groups to understand. Second, the radar charts would need to be simplified in some way. A suggestion made by Teacher X was that pupils could be further included in the process by them colouring in radar chart templates. Otherwise, the formatting of them in Excel would need further thought and

adaptations. Third, the workload of implementing this framework would need to be reduced. This may be eased as teachers become more familiar with the process and could be supported by whole-school initiatives to support individual departments implementing relevant assessment models. However, it is evident that the effort required for the initial implementation, alongside a number of other demands placed on teachers by the school, means that the framework in its current format is unsustainable.

The implications for other teachers and schools wishing to implement the framework and further research possibilities

For music departments wishing to implement the ISM framework in their schools, I would recommend that they think carefully and practically about how the framework will be adapted to suit the pupils and schemes of work in their unique settings. This includes what skill areas they wish to assess and their timeline for assessment across the academic year. Furthermore, they would need to ensure that the framework is made user-friendly for all those involved within their context, not just the pupils. I would also suggest that music departments would need to carefully consider how this framework would fit alongside whole-school frameworks and if it would complement whole-school methods without overburdening staff.

It is clear that something needs to be done to address the falling uptake in music at Key Stage 4 and beyond. There is scope to consider the impact of this framework on pupil perception of their own musical abilities. As noted in this study, a number of pupils were perceived as being surprised that they succeeded in certain areas of music. Perhaps this increase in self-esteem and positive engagement could result in an increased uptake of the subject at Key Stage 4. An extended study, tracking different cohorts of pupils as they move from Key Stages 3 to 4, would need to be carried out in order to establish the potential positive impact of the framework in this area.

There has been a lively pedagogical discourse surrounding the topic of assessment in music in recent decades. Music, by its very nature, is a complex and multi-faceted subject and it is clear that an assessment framework that takes into account, and values equally, each of these elements of learning is needed in schools to address a host of pedagogical obstacles.

Word Count: 19480

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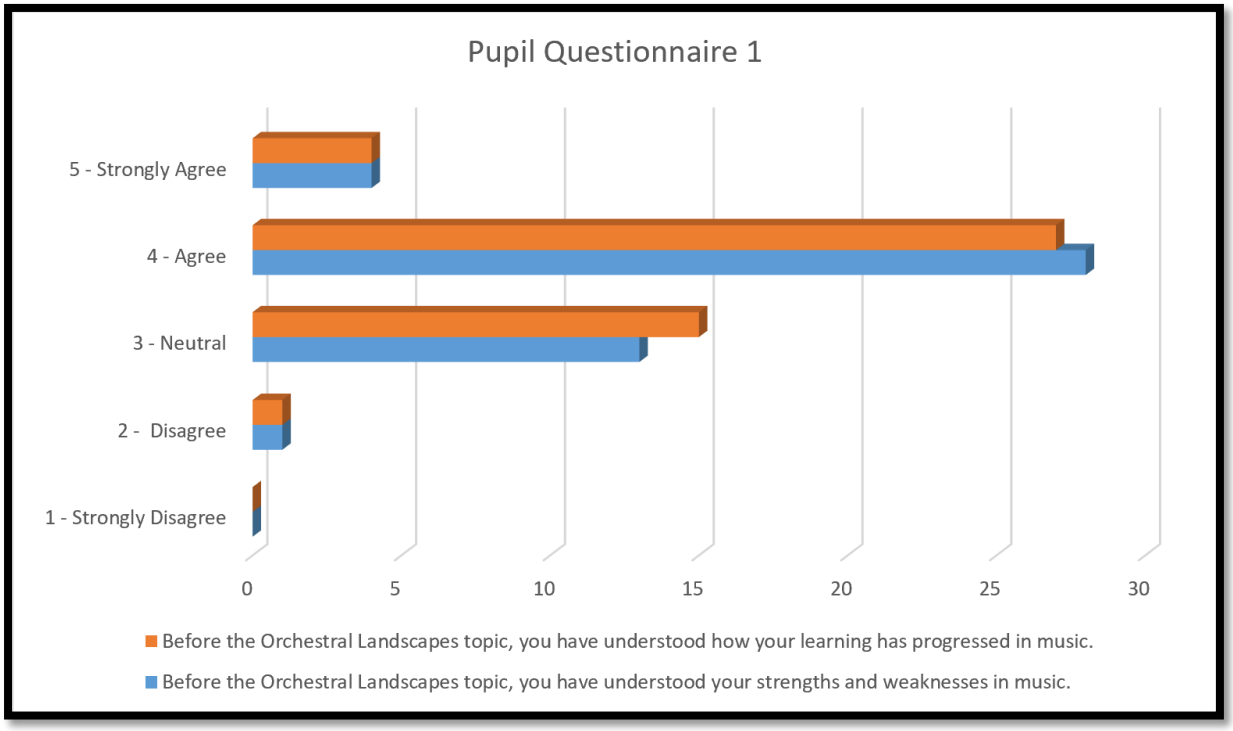
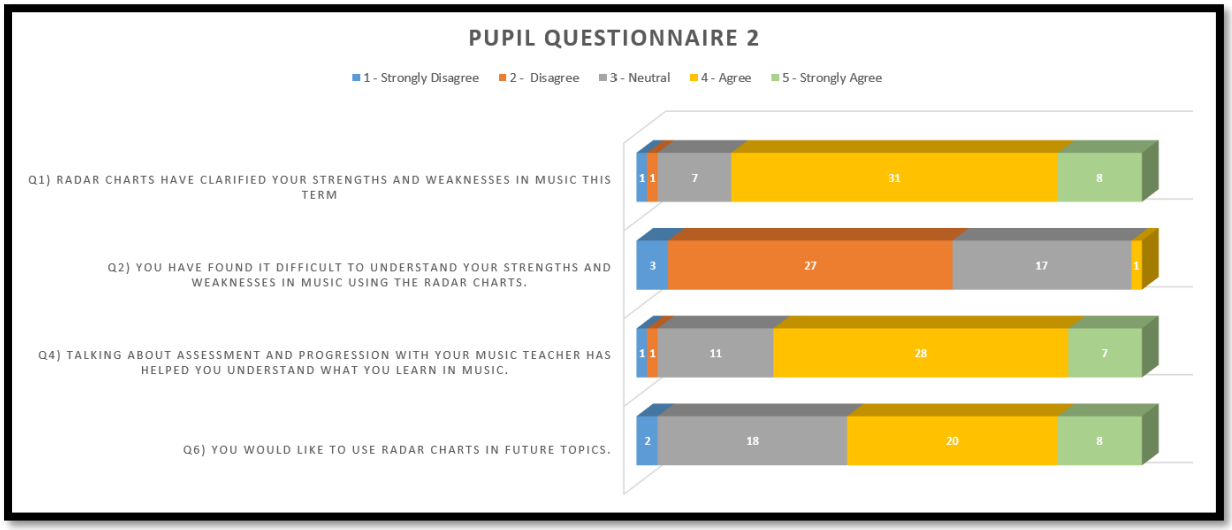
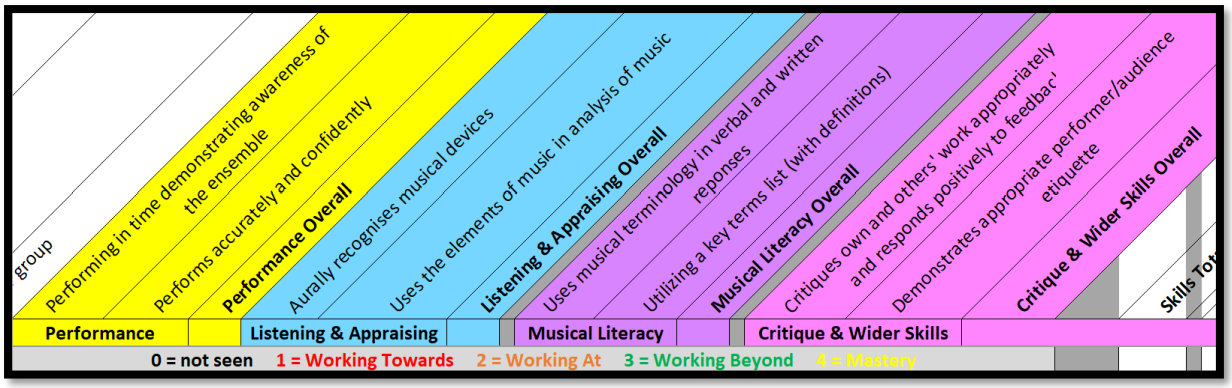
Appendices



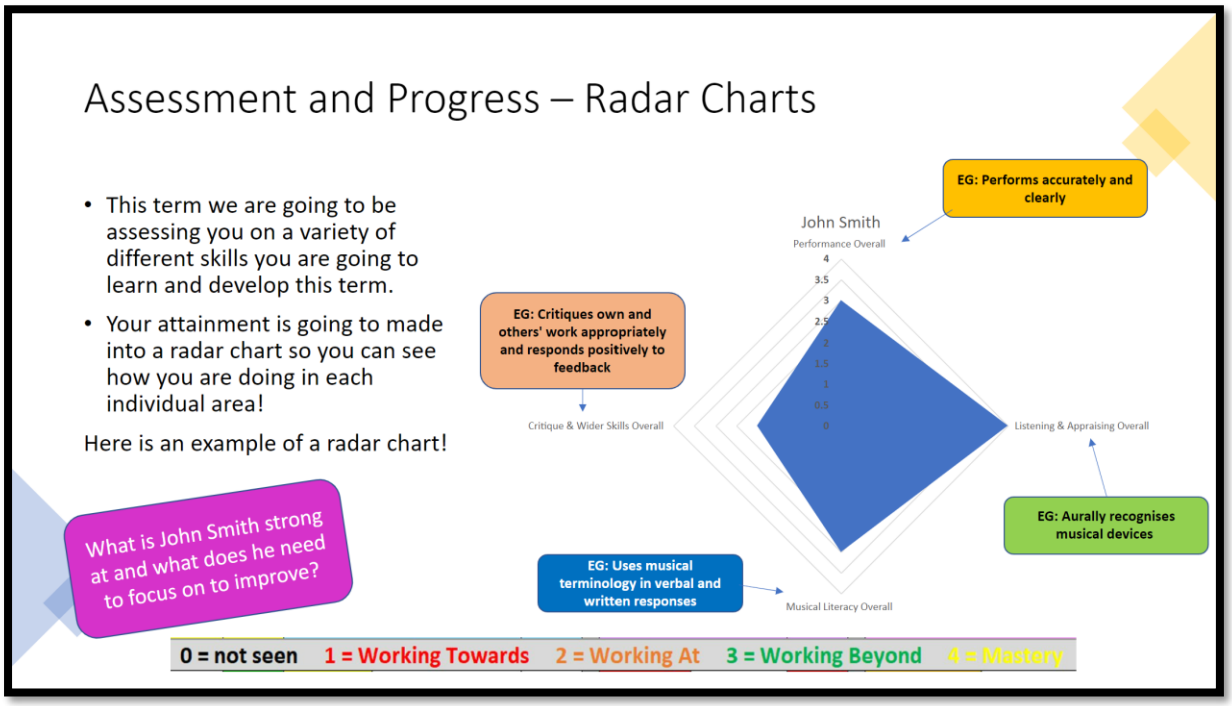
Appendix 1 - Responses to the two Likert scale questions in Pupil Questionnaire 1 taken at the beginning of phase 2.



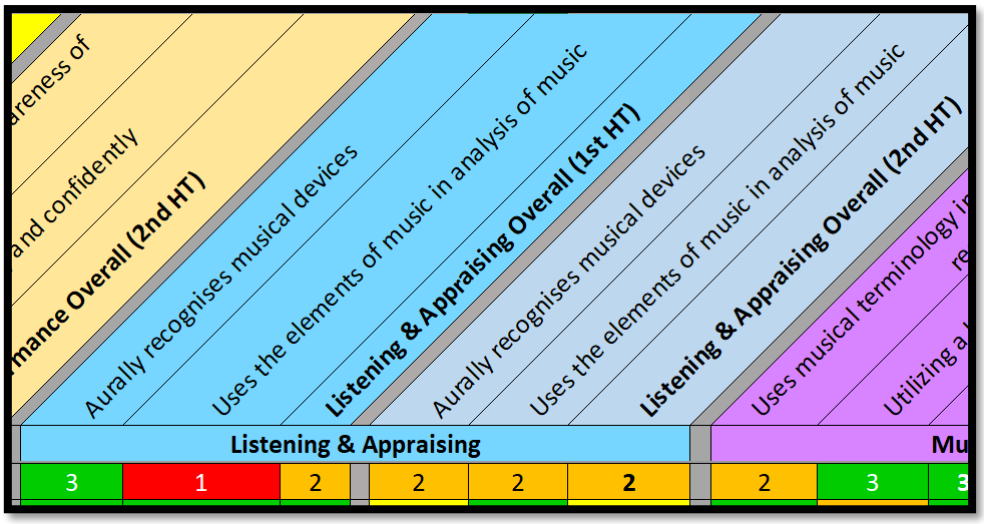
Appendix 2 - Responses to the Likert scale questions in Pupil Questionnaire 2 completed at the end of phase 2 by the Year 7 cohort.



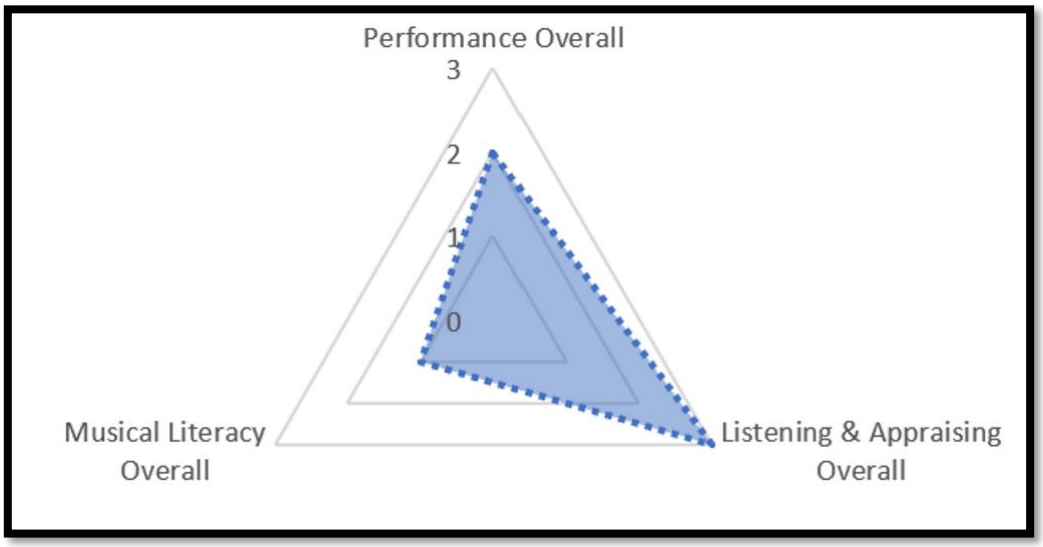
Appendix 3 – A screenshot of the assessment criteria given to pupils in phase 2.



Appendix 4 - The PowerPoint slide showed to Year 7 when they were introduced to the ISM framework at the start of phase 2. The four levels of attainment in each skill areas is shown along the bottom of the slide.



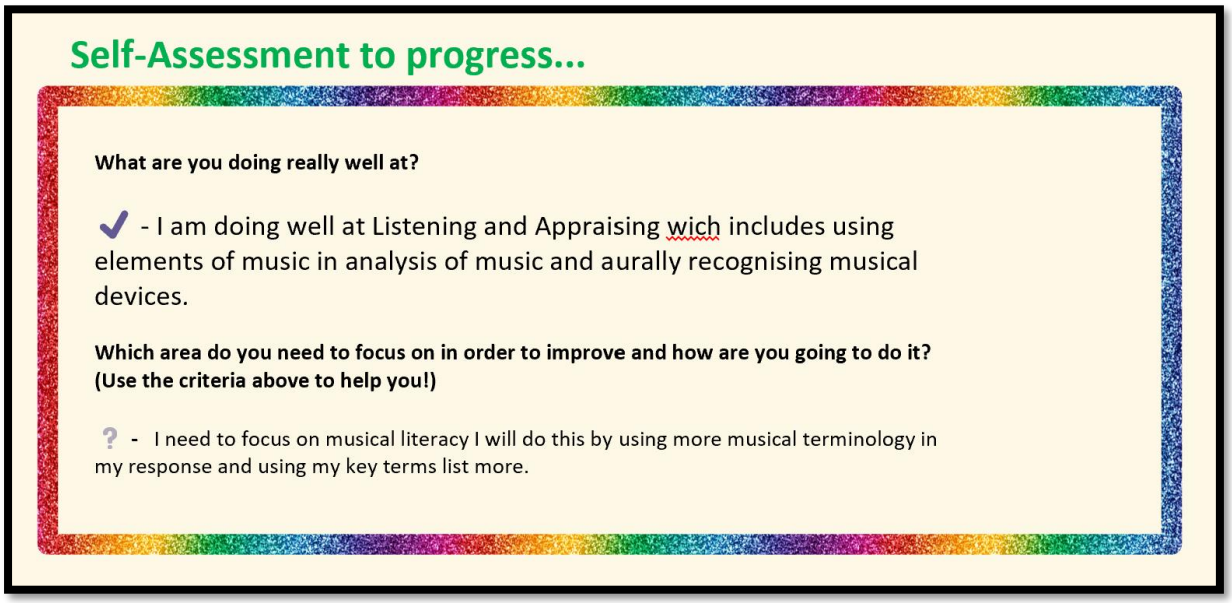
Appendix 5 - In the first half-term, this pupil attained a 3 (working beyond) in 'Aurally recognising musical devices' and a 1 (working towards) in 'Uses the elements of music in analysis of music'. This means their 'Overall' for that skill area in the first half-term averaged out as a 2 (working at).



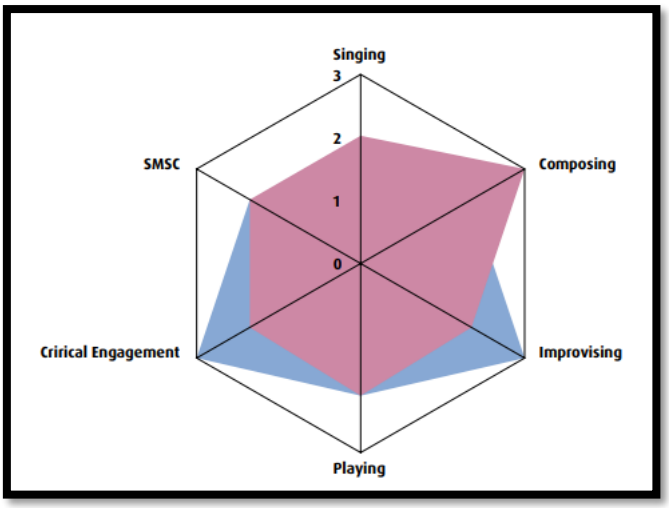
Appendix 6 - A pupil radar chart generated before half-term to illustrate attainment in three of the four skill areas covered by this point in the term. It was given to pupils in the first lesson back.

Score	What does that mean?
0	This area has not been seen by the teacher in your work.
1	You are working towards the expected level in this area.
2	You are working at the expected level in this area.
3	You are working beyond the expected level in this area.
4	You are significantly exceeding the expected level in this area.

Appendix 7 - A grid explaining to pupils how attainment scores have been reached by the teacher for each of their skill areas.



Appendix 8 - A pupil's response to their radar chart before the half-term break. They have used the assessment criteria in their responses and have identified areas for development in their work and how they are going to do that.



Appendix 9 – An exemplar radar chart found on page 18 of the ISM framework document.