

LICP - A Planning, Reflection and Progression Toolkit

By Nancy Evans and Professor Martin Fautley

A review from John Finney:

Bringing together the accumulated knowledge and expertise in the field of children and young people's composing, this is a resource rich in both insights and wise guidance that will enable teachers and their pupils to come to value the process of composing music.

It is widely recognised that composing, as a component of the school curriculum, continues to present challenges and conundrums. It can disrupt moribund notions of sequencing learning and open up the possibility of unpredictable learning as children's musical imaginations are given space to live. There are few, if any, ready-made templates that do justice to the potentials offered by the process of composing, or as John Paynter would say 'making the music go on'. Yet, in this publication we see a systematically considered way of understanding what is at stake when engaging children in composing.

What is composing, what does learning look like, how to respond to and help children to develop their ideas, what does it mean to progress as a composer, how to build a culture of composing in your school or within a group of children? These are the questions addressed in the toolkit's eight sections and one hundred and ten pages. After an introduction and welcome *Section 2: Children and Composing* provides both historical and contemporary context for the place of composing in the curriculum as well as attention to important conceptual clarifications. The section concludes with reflective questions. *Section 3* tackles planning for composing in the primary school, providing opportunity for teachers to reflect on and evaluate current teaching and learning in their school. Most welcome is attention to the setting of composing briefs/tasks with a model provided of the consequences of setting briefs that are tight/closed in a continuum to those that are loose/open. At stake are issues of pupil ownership, predictable-less predictable outcomes, creativity, levels of engagement, the role of the teacher, task management and stylistic norms. As throughout the text is vividly illustrated including generously sized photographs of children in classrooms engaged in the process of composing. *Section 4: Guiding Children Through the Composing Process* deals with ways in which children can be supported at each stage of the composing process from creating the initial idea through to a final polished piece of music. The distinction is made between the complementary non-musical preparation for composing and musical preparation for composing and both showing the scope and range of pre-composing experience that will give rise to the musical impulse and initial musical ideas. No stone is left unturned as the section proceeds to show ways in which the generation of musical ideas might be assisted, how children might select and reject ideas, how they might structure their musical ideas, notate and share them. *Section 5: Planning for Learning* is designed to support composers working in schools. *Section 6: Assessment and Progression* tackles a vexed issue with exemplary directness. Two tabulated pages set out what progression and attainment might look like and sound like within each stage of the composing process and linked to *Section 4: 'Guiding children through the Composing Process'*. *Including Everyone* forms *Section 7* and finally *Section 8: Working in Partnership*. But there is more to this outstanding resource – ten appendices.

Introducing the toolkit Nancy Evans writes of hoping that ... 'it will further appreciation of the diversity and richness of children's musical voices and an understanding that composing is something any child can do and, with the right support and guidance, make progress.' It is a resource to be savoured and championed.