

Year 8 Music Progression Map

Development: retrieve prior learning -> extend technique -> combine roles -> improvise/arrange -> refine with increasing independence.

Strand	1. African Music & Voice	2. Keyboard Skills - When the Saints	3. Blues	4. Ukulele	5. Stand By Me - Ensemble Arrangement
Pulse, rhythm & metre	Major development: hold independent rhythmic parts in whole-class and small-group ensembles; perform ostinati, call and response and layered patterns.	Keep a steady pulse through a more complex melody; coordinate two hands and control rhythm when accompaniment is added.	Keep the 12-bar sequence in time with a backing track; improvise rhythmically while maintaining pulse.	Retrieve and extend: change chords in time; use a wider range of strumming patterns with greater rhythmic control.	Year 8 culmination: maintain bassline, chords or vocals in a small ensemble; coordinate entries and changes without constant teacher direction.
Pitch & melody	Develop pitch matching through vocal work; perform short calls/responses and repeated melodic patterns.	Major development: perform a more demanding melody including B-flat; improve accuracy, phrasing and fluency.	Learn the sound and notes of the blues scale; use them to shape short improvised melodic phrases.	Retrieve familiar melodies through singing/listening; recognise how chord changes support melody.	Learn and maintain the vocal melody; understand its relationship with bassline and chords.
Keyboard technique	-	Major development: extend keyboard geography; use B-flat; improve fingering and fluency; move from two-hand unison towards simple left-hand accompaniment.	Apply and develop: perform 12-bar chords fluently and use the keyboard independently for blues-scale improvisation.	-	Apply prior technique to bassline/chord roles where keyboards are used; maintain the chosen role independently.
Harmony & chords	Hear how rhythmic/vocal layers differ from accompanying parts where relevant.	Understand the role of left-hand accompaniment and begin coordinating melody with harmony.	Major development: perform and understand the repeating 12-bar blues chord sequence in C and its relationship to form.	Retrieve and extend: revisit Year 7 chords, widen chord vocabulary and improve transitions.	Apply in context: perform the chord sequence and understand how harmony supports bassline and vocals.
Notation	Use simple rhythmic/visual notation to support independent parts and connect symbols with sound.	Major development: follow more demanding melodic notation; connect B-flat on the stave to keyboard geography.	Use chord symbols for the 12-bar sequence and record/follow the blues scale where useful.	Read chord diagrams/symbols and rhythmic or strumming notation with increasing independence.	Use chord symbols, lyrics/structure sheets and other appropriate notation to organise rehearsal.
Performing	Major ensemble development: move from whole-class work into increasingly independent small groups; maintain a vocal/percussion role and recover from mistakes.	Develop accuracy -> coordination -> fluency; tackle progressively harder versions and practise difficult passages purposefully.	Perform the 12-bar blues in time with a backing track; move between chord playing and improvisation confidently.	Develop chord fluency, strumming control and continuity; accompany songs with greater confidence than in Year 7.	Year 8 culmination: maintain an independent bass, chord or vocal role; combine parts, rehearse, refine and perform an agreed arrangement.
Singing	Major development: use call and response, repeated vocal patterns and ensemble singing; hold a vocal part against other layers.	Internalise or sing phrases where useful to support pitch and phrasing.	Explore vocal characteristics of blues/work-song traditions through listening and practical response where appropriate.	Use singing to support song performance and connect instrumental accompaniment with the voice.	Major application: perform the vocal part securely and coordinate with instrumental performers with growing independence.
Composition	Create/adapt short rhythmic or vocal ideas; organise them in small groups using layering, entries and repetition.	Not a major focus; make small accompaniment choices as technique develops.	Major creative focus: improvise original phrases with the blues scale inside a fixed 12-bar structure.	Not a major focus; make creative choices about strumming/accompaniment style.	Creative arrangement: decide how and when bassline, chords and vocals combine; refine through rehearsal.
Listening	Identify rhythmic layers, call and response, vocal/percussion timbres, texture and ensemble interaction; link listening to performance.	Listen critically to accuracy, phrasing, rhythm and coordination; identify what needs improvement.	Major focus: recognise 12-bar form, blues sonority and improvisation; connect musical features with historical context.	Compare strumming/accompaniment styles; listen for fluency, rhythmic control and stylistic suitability.	Analyse how bassline, chords, vocals and texture combine in the original and in peer arrangements.
Musical vocabulary	Retrieve pulse, rhythm, ostinato, timbre, texture, structure and call and response; extend vocabulary for layered/vocal music.	Retrieve melody, phrase, step, leap, accompaniment and notation; use flat/B-flat accurately.	Use 12-bar blues, blues scale, improvisation, chord sequence, structure, bassline and accompaniment accurately.	Retrieve chord, strumming, accompaniment, pulse and rhythm; extend as new techniques appear.	Use arrangement, bassline, accompaniment, texture, structure, balance and ensemble to explain decisions.
Texture & structure	Major development: use independent rhythmic/vocal layers, entries, repetition and call and response to organise whole-class and small-group performances.	Perform melody with accompaniment; understand the move from hands together to different musical roles.	Understand repeating 12-bar structure and hear improvisation above harmonic accompaniment.	Hear melody-and-accompaniment texture clearly; vary accompaniment without losing structure.	Major development: manipulate texture by choosing which parts enter, stop or combine; create a coherent arrangement.
Timbre & instruments	Major focus: recognise contrasting percussion/vocal timbres and how different sounds contribute distinct ensemble roles.	Develop awareness of keyboard/piano sonority and how touch affects sound.	Recognise characteristic blues instrumentation and sonorities through listening.	Develop control of ukulele timbre through chord formation and strumming technique.	Compare vocal, bass and chordal timbres; balance different roles within an ensemble.
Genre, style & context	Explore African musical traditions through purposeful repertoire; connect musical features to cultural context.	Use When the Saints mainly for technical development, adding relevant stylistic/contextual links where useful.	Major focus: study blues development, slavery, African American work-song traditions and chain-gang songs; connect context with musical features.	Explore a broader song repertoire; recognise how strumming/accompaniment choices affect style.	Understand how Stand By Me gains its identity from bassline, harmony, vocals, structure and arrangement.
Independent musicianship	Major development from Year 7: transfer teacher-led whole-class ensemble skills into smaller groups; organise rehearsal, maintain a part and solve problems with less support.	Practise at an appropriate level; isolate difficulties; decide when ready to move from melody -> two-hand unison -> accompaniment.	Make spontaneous musical choices; maintain place in the 12-bar structure and recover when ideas go wrong.	Retrieve earlier learning without restarting; practise chord transitions and strumming independently.	Year 8 culmination: organise rehearsal, choose roles, make arrangement decisions, identify problems and refine the performance.