

A woman with blonde hair, wearing large black headphones and a striped shirt, is leaning forward and gesturing with her hands. A young boy with dark hair, also wearing large headphones, is sitting in a chair and smiling broadly, pointing his finger. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall mood is positive and collaborative.

# INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLES

WEST SUSSEX MUSIC  
CONFERENCE 2025

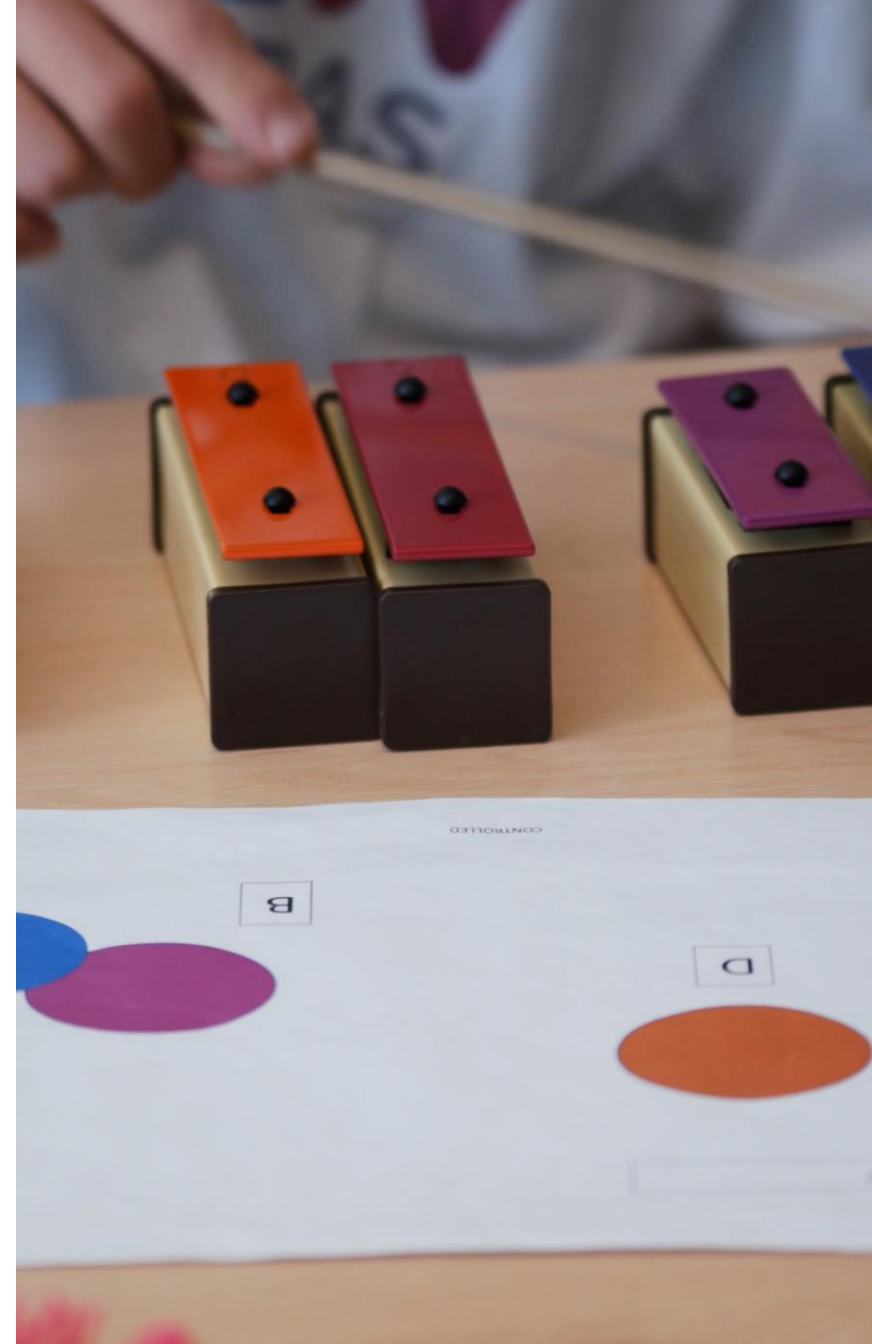
# SESSION AIMS

1. Be ready to take the next step towards creating a (more) inclusive ensemble in your setting – in special or mainstream settings
2. Try out some ideas
3. Enjoy

We will cover:

- The 'what' and 'why' of inclusive ensembles
- Communication methods
- Accessible instruments
- Finding a role in the music
- Repertoire:
  - Creating a 'home groove'
  - Adapting existing repertoire
- How to build an ensemble over two terms

- Open space... who is in the room? Setting?





A young person with dark hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a teal vest, is seated in a wheelchair. They are laughing heartily, with their mouth wide open and eyes closed. A person with long blonde hair, wearing a black shirt and several colorful lanyards, is standing next to them, holding the wheelchair's armrest. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

**INCLUSION IS A FEELING**  
**INCLUSION IS CONNECTION**  
**IT HAPPENS MOMENT TO**  
**MOMENT**

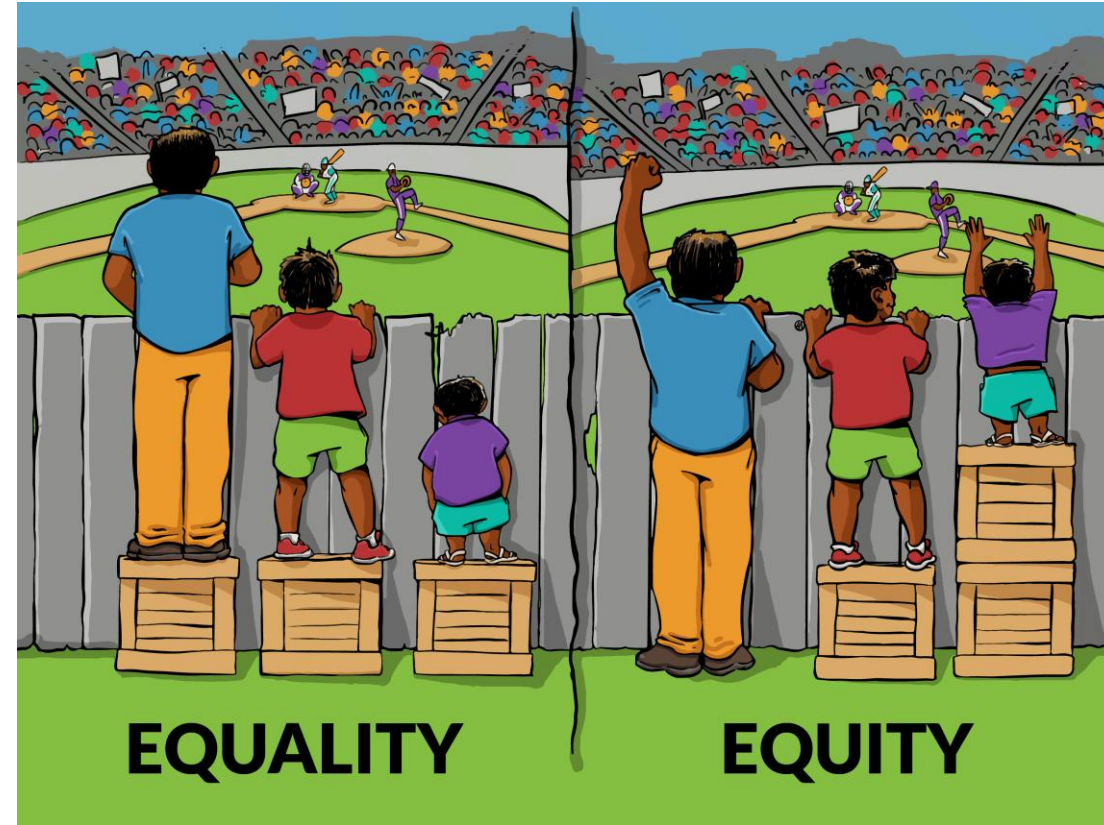
Goodall, Craig. (2018). Inclusion is a feeling, not a place<sub>3</sub>

# LEVELS OF INCLUSION

Begin with  
aims and  
needs, build  
around

Adapting what we are  
already doing to allow  
access

Not excluding anybody from joining  
an activity





# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE?

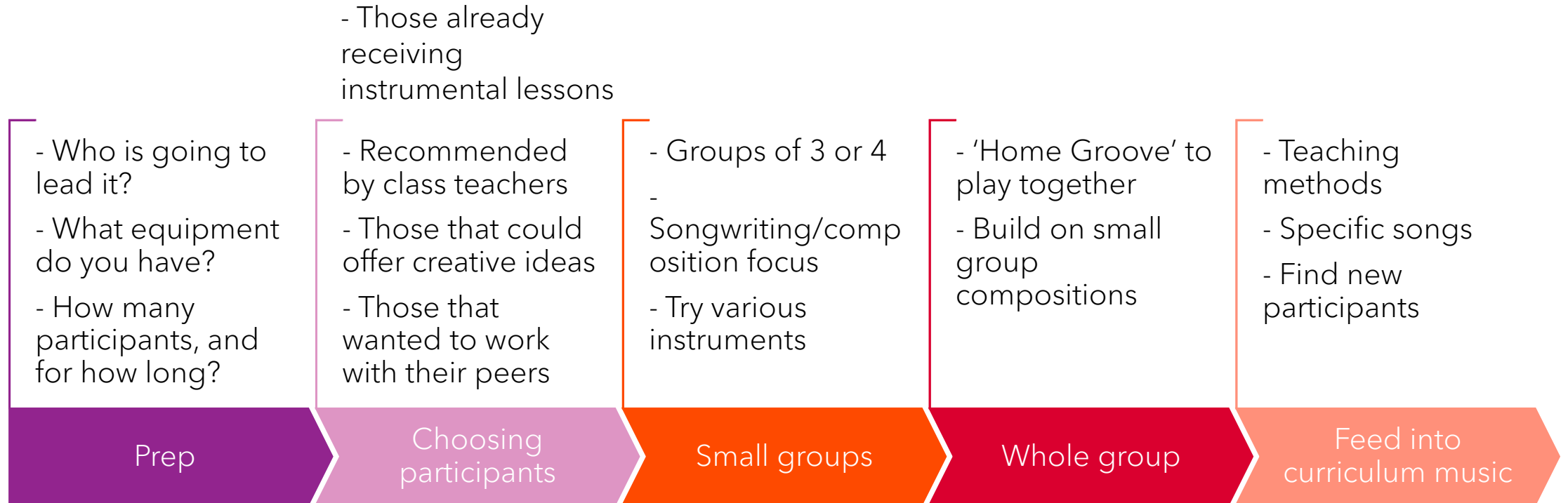
*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods
- Instrumentation
- Opportunities for engagement
- Repertoire
- Session structure and performance opportunities

... so ensembles look different depending on the cohort and setting.

# BUILDING AN NEW ENSEMBLE IN A SPECIALIST SETTING

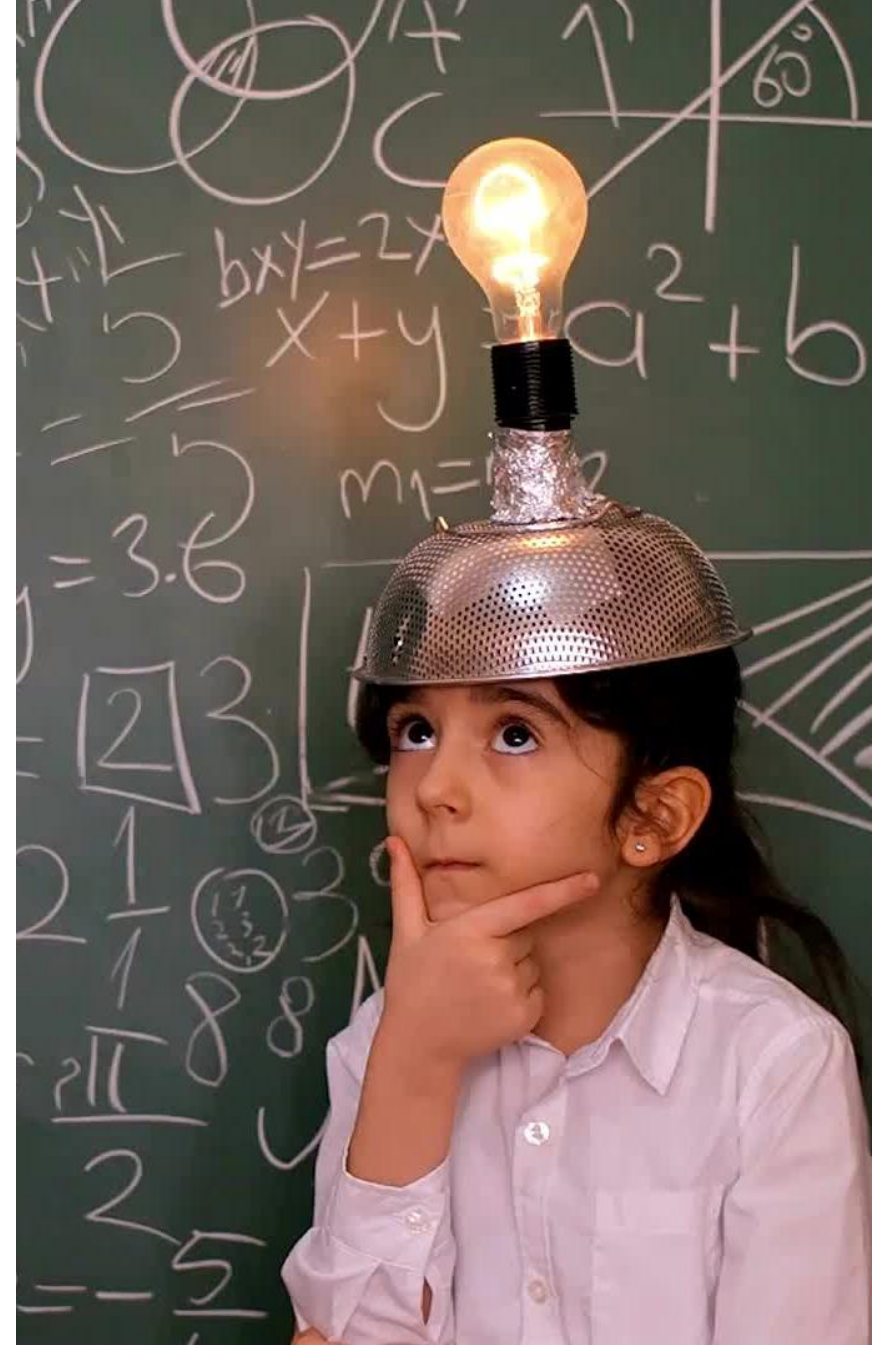


Based on the learning from Ashmount School, Loughborough  
See [www.uprisingballoon.com](http://www.uprisingballoon.com) for more details

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

- What are the most significant barriers that you/your pupils face

e.g. Short concentration span, finds notation difficult, hearing impairment



# BUILDING ENSEMBLES AROUND PUPILS

*In an inclusive ensemble, all elements of music and teaching are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods

Watch the video - How many different types of communication are happening?



# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE ?

*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods
- Instrumentation

# ACCESSIBLE INSTRUMENTS

- *Orba*
- *iPads – Garageband, Thumbjam, Clarion*
- *Microphone*
- *Lancashire Music Tech Library*
- *OHMI Trust – One Handed Musical Instruments*

# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE ?

*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods
- Instrumentation
- Role in the music



# FINDING A ROLE IN ANY GIVEN PIECE

- Some ideas:
  - Singing
  - Rhythm
  - Long notes/chords
  - Melody
  - Solo
  - Sound effects
  - Conducting
  - Dancing
  - ???

# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE ?

*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods
- Instrumentation
- Role in the music
- Repertoire



## THE HOME GROOVE

- WARM UP/INTRODUCTION PIECE
- A SIMPLE CHORD PROGRESSION PLUS HOOK/BREAK(S)
- EVERYONE GIVES TO THEIR ABILITY
- SPACE FOR ONGOING COMPOSITION & IMPROV



# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE ?

*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods
- Instrumentation
- Role in the music
- Repertoire
- Session Structure

# WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE ?

*An ensemble in which all elements of are built around the needs, abilities and interests of its participants.*

These elements include

- Communication methods

- Repertoire

- Instrumentation - Orba, Instrument 1, Theramini, Garageband, Thumbjam

- Session structure and performance opportunities

It takes time and some trial and error, but when these things are in place individuals have the best chance of 'getting lost in the music'.



## IN SUMMARY:

## LET'S DO IT!

- In mainstream settings, we can adapt our repertoire, instrumentation and communication styles to better engage pupils in group music-making. Small changes can have a big impact.
- Creating an inclusive ensemble in a special school is achievable! Start small and build. Your hub can help you.
- [www.uprisingballoon.com](http://www.uprisingballoon.com) for videos of inclusive ensembles in action
- [www.transformancemusic.org](http://www.transformancemusic.org) for a list of apps and equipment  
[ben@transformancemusic.org](mailto:ben@transformancemusic.org) @bensellerz – questions, comments
- Questions, comments, final Menti, try out instruments