

# Insight

**RNIB**

supporting blind and  
partially sighted young people

## Music

**Notation: Reading music and  
writing it down**

**Taking GCSE Music**

**Plus**

**Personalised learning**

**Planning and recording in the  
Early Years**

**Getting the most from Work  
Experience**





# Music Books

## Music for Children and Young People with Complex Needs

Adam Ockelford

(2008) Oxford University Press



A thorough account of key issues in the fascinating field of music for children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Ockelford adopts a broad perspective, including reference to research from the fields of developmental psychology, music education, and the psychology of music. His aims are two-fold: firstly to give an exposition of a suggested model that can be used to underpin both education in music and education through music; and secondly to use this model as a basis for offering practical advice for practitioners. The book is particularly significant since it stands as the first of its kind, written for a readership of practitioners from a number of related fields: policy makers, academics and also interested parents.

The book is clearly structured and written in four parts. Part 1 outlines three of the major issues: the patchiness in provision for music education in this field; the lack of clarity in the roles of music teachers and therapists; and the scarcity of properly developed curriculum materials for music, including assessment tools. The reader's attention is drawn to the limitations of the QCA's "P-levels" for music, which many teachers recognise as unhelpful and unsystematic. Part 2 explores how music "makes sense", referring to evidence from the

field of the psychology of music. Ockelford explains and discusses his own "zygonic theory" in which musical meaning is thought to make sense through a feeling of derivation; imitation and repetition are therefore considered fundamental in this account of musical cognition. In the subsequent section, the book goes on to explore how this theory may be relevant in the education of children with complex needs, and a new model is suggested in the form of the "Sounds of Intent Framework" (see page 22). This provides an assessment tool that relates to musical responses across the range of pupils with PMLD and SLD. The final part of the book considers particular musical abilities within this pupil group, including "savants", which may reflect uneven profiles of development. Strategies that may be used to support their musical development are discussed, emphasising the importance of specialist provision for these students, and also for all those who are assessed at the highest two levels within the Sounds of Intent framework.

The book benefits from frequent reference to research evidence, and this is explained with lucidity and with the benefit of the author's own insights into a field in which he is an experienced researcher as well as a practitioner. It offers a great deal that will be of value to those involved in planning for the much needed development of provision in the field. For anyone who is aware of the particular value of music in this context, it will make compelling reading.

- **Pat Lloyd**  
Advanced Skills Teacher and  
Music therapist