

ArtForms Colour Awards

What are they?

- Colour Awards are a way of recording students' achievements.
- They cover a broad range of skills: technical, aural, creative, ensemble and performance aspects, together with the skills involved in learning music with or without notation.
- When students have achieved a particular stage in the development of a skill, it is recorded on a card.
- ***All skills are developed through the instrument or voice which is used primarily in the lesson.*** For example aural skills are not separately assessed away from the instrument as for most external exams.
- ***The broad range of skills are expected to progress together in synchronisation.***
- Awards are split into the easiest – Red, through to Orange and Yellow (approximately grade 1). *Green, Blue and Purple to be ready Autumn 2015.*
- When all skills have been achieved on an Award, a certificate can be presented to the learners.

Why do we use them?

- Pupils will develop confidence by realising that they have achieved something.
- Achievements can be formally recognised by students and teachers for relatively small developments within a skill: it may take two or three years to accomplish an external exam., but an achievement on a Red Award could be accomplished in the first lesson (e.g. keeping a pulse).
- As the Awards are records of skills covered, rather than tests, they do not pose a pass/fail challenge to learners.
- The skills covered are broader than any national exam. board, helping to open up more pathways for the learner
- As skills are developed through the primary instrument or voice, they will be connected to other learning, and feel relevant to the learner
- Not all students are happy taking an exam., but still value the feeling that they are progressing - an Award will demonstrate this in a tangible way.
- The Awards give a clear indication to teachers of which skills pupils need to develop, and what is appropriate at a given stage.
- Parents find cards informative and encouraging – often a parent may not realise the progress their son/daughter is making.
- Schools also value the process
- Unlike external exams, the Awards do not cost the school or the student anything.

How we use them

- Skills needed for Awards are developed within normal weekly lessons, and achievements recorded as and when they happen – there is no time scale dictated. The only exception is performance, where playing in front of a large audience may be the goal (Yellow Award).
- The circles on the cards are coloured in, ticked, stamped, or filled with a smiley face. There are spaces for recording every five and then ten achievements with a sticker. This is to help maintain the students' feeling of success, and therefore motivation.
- Pupils have one card each in the case of small group lessons, so that they can show parents their progress. For whole class use, there is a larger card which can be displayed in the classroom.
- When all circles have been filled in a certificate can be awarded. There are blanks for these in the office. It is always good to let school co-ordinators, head teachers or heads of music know, and if possible have certificates presented in assembly.

Ways in which skills can be developed are left up to the imagination and resourcefulness of the individual teacher – they are not prescribed – ask, borrow, devise your own, share!