Music Subject Rationale

Musical 'knowledge' has been described as knowing how to *make* music, knowing *musical practices* with *critical insight* and knowing how music *enriches* the inner life: in summary music *making* and music *thinking* (Toyne, 2021). This curriculum, which is informed by the Model Music Curriculum (MMC) (2021), develops musical knowledge within this conceptual framework. A knowledge-rich curriculum can be misinterpreted as being about knowing 'facts'. Within the discipline of music this would be a misconception: an understanding of music can only begin to develop where the language of music is explored through experience. Musical knowledge which is gained through experience (which can be difficult to put into words) is sometimes referred to as 'tacit' knowledge. In this curriculum, such experience is developed through singing, listening, composing (including improvising) and performing. These musical practices are woven throughout the curriculum, and are carefully sequenced so that pupils can build procedural knowledge and technical skills through practice. This allows them to begin to realise and develop their own expressive intentions through music.

Beginning to understand the language of music might be described as becoming more 'musical'. This is the aim of this curriculum. As such, each unit has a *musical* focus, such as pulse, rhythm, tempo, pitch, timbre, dynamics, form/structure, texture or harmony or a combination of these. These are sometimes called the *dimensions of music*. Knowledge of the dimensions is sometimes referred to as 'constructive' knowledge. Pupils may explore how music is constructed using the elements of music by listening analytically or using them as components to build their own compositions. Experience of, understanding and use of these elements build gradually throughout the curriculum. For example, in year one children begin to understand pulse by marching. By the time they reach year 6 they have progressed to learn the difference between simple and compound metre.

Different pieces and genres of music are explored as examples of the different musical focus in each unit. For example, in year 4, by listening to Duke Ellington's 'Take the 'A' Train', children are able to understand the concept of the 'off-beat' in swing music, which is a type of jazz. The different elements of music do not exist in isolation from each other, so, whilst a unit will have a primary musical focus on a particular dimension, other dimensions are highlighted and used alongside the primary dimension to develop the children's musical understanding. For example, whilst studying Ellington's 'Take the 'A' Train' year 4 also learn that it includes examples of improvisation, which are an important part of jazz music. It is recognised that children's understanding of and proficiency in practising music builds with repeated experience of how the different elements of music intersect. As such these elements are woven throughout the curriculum so that children can begin to build automaticity in their musical practice.

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The different genres of music which are explored in the curriculum introduce them to the wonderfully diverse story of music and build pupil's declarative knowledge of musical culture and history. Music is drawn from a variety of traditions, including western and non-western classical music, folk, and a variety of modern traditions including rock, pop and jazz. Pieces are drawn from all over the world and from periods spanning six centuries. Because the driving focus of each unit is musical, music is not presented in chronological sequence. Increasing cultural contextual understanding is enhanced by learning about music which relates to other areas of the PKC curriculum. For example, in year 5 children learn about Nigerian drumming at the same time as learning about art from the same region.

Each unit, over the course of six lessons, follows the same structure. At first the children listen to and encounter music which will form the focus of their musical learning. This is not a passive exercise: they are encouraged to actively engage with the area of musical learning which will be the focus of the unit. They then explore the key musical ingredients and cultural context of the piece of music through active music making. Practising, improvising and/or composing then allows them further to experience and investigate the key musical focus before performing the music they have made to their peers. Evaluation of their own and others' performances concludes the process.

Each lesson in the unit also follows a broadly similar structure: warming up the body and the voice using songs which relate to the musical focus of the unit; recalling prior learning; listening to, responding to and exploring music which forms the focus of learning for the lesson; creative practice based around the focus music whether by composing, improvising, practising or performing; evaluating and reflecting at the end of the lesson. A familiar structure week by week aims to create and perpetuate an effective learning environment. Lesson 6 of each unit has an emphasis on practising for performance, performing and evaluating that performance. As such this lesson is broadly the same in each unit with no or little new learning. This is deliberate: the lesson is intended for the children to practise, allowing them to build on their procedural knowledge and technical skills to be able to perform with increasing confidence and expression.

Each lesson starts with singing as this is the essential basis of musical learning. Songs are generally revisited over the course of a unit, from unit to unit and across year groups to allow for repeated practice of familiar material, allowing children to build their singing skills. Elements of the songs chosen often relate to the musical focus encountered in the rest of the lesson. Learning music through movement (as developed by the methods of Dalcroze and Kodály) is also seen as a central element of musical development and therefore forms an important part of many lessons. Western notation is learned using the methods of Kodály and introduced slowly and in relation to a gradual increase in understanding of musical elements which the children experience as the focus of each unit. It is important that 'sound' is encountered and understood before its corresponding 'symbol' is introduced. Finally, each lesson includes an element of working with others. This is central to musical practice and may be experienced as a whole class or in smaller groups which are introduced as the children get older and can manage social cooperation with more efficacy.

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This curriculum is for classroom music and as such does not seek to cover learning a particular instrument (such as the recorder or ukelele) in a whole class/group setting or wider musical opportunities such as singing in a choir, playing in a band or ensemble, performing outside the classroom and watching musical performances outside the school setting. It is expected that such activities, which are important (and recommended by both the MMC and National Plan for Music Education (NPME) (2022)) will be provided alongside this curriculum, which forms only a part of a child's musical education at school. Music which the children listen to, create and perform as a part of this curriculum can, of course, be a springboard or impetus for musical activity outside of the classroom. It is recognised that schools may find it challenging to deliver the whole of this curriculum in LKS2 at the same time as providing whole class instrumental lessons as recommended by the Model Music Curriculum (2021). If schools choose to deliver only a part of this curriculum in years 3 and 4, replacing weekly music lessons with an instrumental lesson, omitting the units 'Vivaldi's Winter' (Y3), 'Sounds of the Sea' (Y3), 'Solo' (Y4) and 'Announcing an Entrance' (Y4) will have least impact on overall progression.