

Music Express & The Model Music Curriculum (MMC)

INTRODUCTION TO KEY STAGES 1 & 2

INTRODUCTION TO SINGING, LISTENING, COMPOSING AND PERFORMING

The MMC says...

The MMC explores how musical techniques and skills can be nurtured and developed in all pupils, through all Key Stages. It recognises that such skills may be expressed instrumentally, vocally or through music technology.

The MMC takes as its starting point the ambition that every young person should be able to experience music and to make progress. This includes singing, as well as having the opportunity to learn an instrument through whole-class ensemble and small-group teaching at Key Stage 2.

The following guidance covers the skills of singing, composing, listening and performing – individually and collectively – and applies across the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2.

In Music Express...

Music Express is a complete and holistic music scheme for primary class teachers. It offers a broad, deep, meaningful and practical experience for musically rich teaching and learning, in line with the statutory National Curriculum for KS1 and KS2. The scheme also mirrors and covers the intentions of the new, non-statutory Model Music Curriculum (MMC). Where the MMC gives guidance, Senior Leadership and teachers can be confident that the huge range of diverse material in Music Express meets requirements. The scheme is carefully planned around a framework of spiral learning, and ambitious yet appropriate progression ensures that potential is continually developed, enriched and reinforced. Everything needed to deliver engaging lessons is provided: planning and assessment materials, recordings, videos, displays, step-by-step teaching notes, technology advice are all part of the resource and suggested adaptations for children with SEND are available in the teaching notes.

The year group, listening, and KS2 Indicative musical features documents illustrate how the scheme reflects and delivers the recommendations of the new Model Music Curriculum in more detail. The below briefly outlines how Music Express approaches the skills of singing, composing, listening and performing.

SINGING

The MMC says...

Singing is a great strength of the primary sector and many schools and organisations already support excellent practice. Through good vocal production, careful listening and well-developed sense of pitch, pupils should be able to sing in harmony and with musical delivery by the end of Year 6.

Many aspects of good singing and good singing teaching are processes that will develop slowly over time. The following principles should be kept in mind as pupils develop their vocal potential through the Key Stages:

- Warm ups will help pupils use their voices safely. There are many places to find good examples of vocal warm ups, and they will typically include vocalising, sirening and simple scales, as well as games to energise pupils.
- Breathing. Increasing control of airflow will help pupils to sing longer phrases, adjust dynamics, improve tuning and phrase melodies expressively.
- Posture. A relaxed but stable stance (soft knees) sets the body up to produce an unforced but well-focused sound. Pupils, especially younger pupils, will often want to move to the music and this helps to facilitate that.
- Dynamics. When appropriate, class singing should include a dynamic range as a key expressive tool. Confident singing will often be loud but need not tip over into shouting.
- Phrasing gives shape to melodic lines. Through small dynamic changes, it helps emphasise important syllables and create musical interest in the melody.
- Context. Music can often be brought to life by considering the context in which it was written, or by discussing the meaning of any words.
- Vocal health. Warming up before singing, staying hydrated, resting voices, particularly when there is lots of singing to do, keeping vocal muscles relaxed.

The MMC includes suggested singing repertoire which is age-appropriate; the pieces use language appropriate for use in schools and use a range of notes that are comfortable for the age of the pupil. There are many wonderful songs available for use in schools and teachers should use the knowledge provided by partner organisations to choose appropriate repertoire for their school.

In Music Express...

Music Express will help children to find their voice, keep it healthy and express themselves with increasing accuracy and control. A diverse range of musical traditions and a deep understanding of the inter-related dimensions are explored continually through the units. Complexity progresses with extended range and phrasing, part-songs, harmonies and performance skills.



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LISTENING

The MMC says...

Listening to music is fundamental to musical understanding. By learning to listen critically, pupils will not only expand their musical horizons but also gain a deeper understanding of how music is constructed and the impact it can have on the listener. Listening to a broad range of music also helps develop other areas of musical activity, including composing and performing.

Music is one of the central building blocks of any culture and the shared knowledge of music is crucial cultural capital in understanding where we came from and our place in the world. An inclusive approach to this cultural capital is represented in this document to encourage pupils to be open minded in their listening as well as knowledgeable about the breadth of musical genres in the world today.

Teachers are encouraged to use pieces from a wide range of cultures and traditions that truly reflect the community in which they are teaching. The pieces in the following tables have been suggested across Years 1–6 to ensure that pupils gain a broad aural knowledge of Western Classical Music, Popular Music (defined broadly) and Traditional Music from around the world. Through active listening to these or equivalent works, many of which can be found in Appendix 2 and 3, all pupils will be given a solid aural foundation that doesn't rely on previous musical exposure. Additionally, it provides a secure starting point from which to explore further repertoire as desired. The suggested repertoire is presented cumulatively through the years to encourage teachers to revisit pieces. Pieces printed in bold are new for the year group.

In Music Express...

Music Express places strong emphasis on listening skills as crucial to the understanding, interpretation, and life-long love of music. Teachers can be confident that children will encounter some of the pieces mentioned in the MMC expanded upon by a wide range of equivalent works through the scheme. Styles range from early music, classical and modern orchestral tracks to folk, jazz, pop, rock and numerous other traditions. Music from many different countries is embedded as the focus or stimulus for multiple units in each year of study.

COMPOSING

The MMC says...

The creative process, with its wide horizons of possibility, gives pupils an opportunity to contribute to musical culture in unique and valuable ways. As pupils travel through the Key Stages, they will develop the craft of creating melodies and fashioning these into short pieces. Familiarity with music in a range of styles and genres is crucial for developing the aural understanding needed to compose music. It is also worth planning the year so that music listened to and performed is linked and that both of these activities inform pupils' composition. The development of a reliable musical

memory is a valuable skill for performers and composers. As an integral part of composition work, pupils should practise recalling, e.g., melodic shapes, harmonic sequences, rhythmic patterns and sections of their compositions.

In Music Express...

Music Express quickly enables children to experiment, arrange, improvise and compose. These skills are carefully supported and each aspect of the inter-related dimensions is explored. Melody, harmony, textures and structures are gradually introduced in a variety of contexts and traditions to instil confidence and enjoyment within meaningful experiences. Teaching materials are provided with various options regarding the use of equipment and technology.

PERFORMING

The MMC says...

Creating opportunities to celebrate, share and experience music of all kinds will consolidate the learning within the MMC. The following principles of performance apply across all Key Stages:

- *Develop stagecraft. Develop a sense of confidence and ownership regardless of the size or nature of the stage or performing/recording space; engage with an audience; respect fellow performers and acknowledge applause.*
- *Consider the programme. The sequence of items should maximise impact and maintain audience engagement. Aim for a clear beginning, middle and end for any performance activity.*
- *Encourage peer feedback. Create an environment where pupils can constructively express their thoughts on performances. This is a valuable way to develop listening skills and musical vocabulary.*
- *Seek out opportunities for collaboration. If more than one class or group is performing, is there an additional item they can present together?*

In Music Express...

Music Express encourages performance from the very beginning. Musicianship is developed in key areas such as accuracy, expression and ensemble awareness. Each year group has several opportunities to perform musical items from diverse and exciting resources. Children will increasingly make plans and decisions about performance content with options available to perform their own compositions and arrangements.

