



Rationale for our Music Curriculum

Our Intent

At St Mary of the Angels Primary School, we strive to cultivate a real enjoyment of music and aim to deliver high-quality music teaching, supporting, and encouraging all children to achieve their full potential. Through Music at St Mary's, we aim to: foster a love and understanding of music through active involvement in listening, appraising, composing and performing; enable children's personal expression, reflection and emotional development through music making, both individually and together; and promote the understanding and appreciation of the richness and diversity of world cultures, styles, times and periods.

Early Years

In the EYFS, the emphasis is on exploration and creativity in musical activities. The Early Learning Goals for Expressive Arts and Design include opportunities for children to invent, adapt, and recount narratives, thus integrating storytelling with music. Children engage in singing a variety of well-known nursery rhymes and songs, which provides a foundation for rhythm, pitch, and melody. They are encouraged to perform songs, rhymes, and stories collaboratively, developing not only their musical skills but also their social and communication skills. Through movement in response to music, they begin to explore the concepts of tempo and dynamics, laying the groundwork for more complex musical understanding in later years.

Year 1

In Year 1, students begin to explore sound creation using their voices and instruments. They learn to play basic notes on a glockenspiel, introducing them to tuned percussion. They also develop an understanding of untuned percussion instruments such as triangles, tambourines, and drums, learning to maintain a steady beat. This year focuses heavily on developing listening skills, as students' express preferences for different music styles and articulate whether they like or dislike particular pieces. By clapping and repeating rhythmic patterns, they enhance their awareness of pulse and begin to make connections between sounds and emotions.

Year 2

Building on their prior learning experiences, children in Year 2 engage with more complex musical ideas. They learn to sing or clap to increasing and decreasing tempos, thereby experiencing the concept of dynamics. Introduced to playing simple rhythmic patterns on instruments, they also develop proficiency on the recorder and glockenspiel. Notation begins to play a vital role in their learning, as they start naming notes and recognising the relationship between written music and sound. The ability to compose and perform simple melodies empowers them to express themselves creatively and solidify their understanding of musical structure.

Year 3

By Year 3, the focus shifts towards deepening instrumental skills. Students learn to play clear notes and use the elements of composition to create specific moods or feelings. Listening skills are honed as they recognise high and low phrases. The concept of repetition in music is explored through creating patterns with various instruments, which enhances their understanding of structure and form. This year also introduces the importance of refinement in compositions, encouraging students to analyse

their work critically and implement improvements. Furthermore, they begin to explore famous composers, such as Bob Marley, recognising the contributions of different musical traditions.

Year 4

Year 4 marks a significant advancement in complexity as students are encouraged to sing from memory with pitch accuracy. The use of notation becomes more sophisticated, allowing students to record their compositions independently or in groups. They learn to appreciate the role of silence in music and consider its effect on the overall composition. Integrating technology into their learning, students record their compositions, experimenting with various rhythmic sequences. Understanding the purpose of music and its emotional impacts is central this year, paving the way for deeper analysis of styles, including early works by composers such as Beethoven, Mozart, and Elgar.

Year 5

In Year 5, students are encouraged to collaborate more effectively, maintaining their part while others perform simultaneously. Composition skills are further refined, as they create music that employs a range of musical elements, including major and minor chords. The concept of tempo becomes critical as students learn to choose appropriate speeds for their compositions. Students develop their evaluative skills, using musical vocabulary to describe and compare different pieces, and they begin to explore the cultural impact of genres such as jazz by examining the works of Louis Armstrong alongside other American composers. In Year 5, the delivery of music is enhanced through the addition of a weekly peripatetic violin specialist.

Year 6

Finally, Year 6 students are prepared for more advanced performance, including singing in harmony, and taking leadership roles during performances. Their compositions integrate a variety of musical devices, allowing for greater creativity and expression. This year focuses on analysis, with students recalling and evaluating music they have listened to while considering the influence of the performance context. They engage in comparative studies between composers, such as Benjamin Britten, fostering a deeper appreciation for the historical and cultural significance of music.

Through this cumulative approach, students evolve from beginner music-makers in the EYFS to confident musicians by Year 6, equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to appreciate, perform, and create music throughout their lives.