

Music at Clifton Primary School

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Intent and rationale

The intention of the music curriculum at Clifton is for children to take an active part in music making and appreciation in a variety of ways. They will hone practical skills in using their voices as well as instruments and technology to practise, create and perform music. We want to inspire an interest and curiosity in a range of musical styles and traditions, and to use music as a way to learn about both their own and other cultures and traditions. Through exposure to and appraisal of a broad range of musical genres and historical contexts, we endeavour to inspire children to find music that moves them, that they will continue to take joy from throughout their lives, as their tastes change and mature. Children will also learn the fundamental elements, or interrelated dimensions of music, recognise how different musicians use them to create different effects, and how they can use these themselves to perform, improvise and compose.

We will build the children's knowledge and skills in music to enable them to take part in performances and appreciate different aspects of the music they hear as they get older. We will encourage them to form opinions about their tastes in music, alongside an awareness of different styles and traditions from different times and places. Children will have the opportunity to foster their instrumental flare and use this as a form of expression.

Practical skills and knowledge have been organised into four main strands in the music curriculum at Clifton. These are: playing, performing and notation; Creating; Listening, understanding and historical awareness; and Key vocabulary.

Playing, performing and notation:

With playing, performing and notation, all children will learn to both use their voices and musical instruments to learn songs, participate in performances and use notation practically. All children from reception to year 6 will participate in regular singing both in class, and in assemblies delivered by a singing specialist. We hope to inspire them by choosing songs which both expose them to music they may not have experience of, and to enthuse them by singing songs they may be familiar with through popular culture or their own cultural background.

We aim to foster a love of practical music making by giving all children the opportunity to learn and perform using a range of musical instruments. In year 3, all children will have the opportunity to learn the recorder for half of the school year from a specialist recorder teacher. In year 4, children will learn to play either a percussion or chord-based instrument for the whole year from a specialist instrumental teacher. We have selected instruments based on both interest from children here at Clifton, and so that they have the opportunity to be exposed to a different type of instrument in year 4 than year 3. We are one of the only schools to teach whole class tabla lessons in Birmingham, which has links to some of the children's cultural heritage, and shows a diverse approach to music which not only gives importance to Western classical

traditions. We also teach keyboard and ukulele lessons to year 4, both instruments also aiming to expose children to a range of playing styles. Children will also have the opportunity to progress further with these instruments and specialist teachers through elective instrumental clubs in years 5 and 6. In all year groups, all children have regular access to glockenspiels as well as untuned percussion instruments.

In terms of performing we want to inspire children to have the confidence to share the practical skills they have learnt using their voices and instruments. In years 3 and 4, all children will have the opportunity to perform to other children, including parents in year 4. By involving parental and familial attendance at performances we hope to give children more encouragement and praise from their community for taking part in performances. All children will also have the opportunity to sing in school festival assemblies, which also will encourage an appreciation for music drawn from different traditions and cultures.

We aim for children to use notation naturally to aid them learn during both singing and instrumental lessons, so that it is not seen as a separate skill. Notations for rhythm and pitch are introduced gradually using different representations throughout the curriculum. Notation specific to different instruments will be introducing during those instrumental lessons.

Creating:

Throughout the curriculum, we want children to be able to experiment with different sounds using their voices, instruments and technology. Skills of composition and improvisation will be introduced gradually so as not to overwhelm children. For example, in year 2 this may involve children choosing and ordering sounds to create a different mood, while in year 3 they will use their instrument to improvise a short phrase using only one or two notes, while in year 6 they will be expected to compose and perform short melodies using up to five notes.

Listening, understanding and historical awareness:

At Clifton, we want children to be open to listening and appreciating music from a wide range of genres, historical periods, traditions and styles. We have chosen units of work for years 1 to 6 with the intention of exposing children to the works of great composers and traditions, as well as to enthuse children by appealing to their interest. For example, in year 6, one unit of work is based around the song Happy by Pharrell Williams, this has been selected as we know it will engage many children to enthusiastically participate in singing, while another unit of work has been selected entitled Classroom Jazz, to ensure that children in this year group are exposed to singing, playing, listening and analysing a completely different style of music.

Key vocabulary:

To ensure that children can both use and talk about the inter-related dimensions of music, key vocabulary for each year group has been specified so that children learn and embed knowledge of key musical elements including: pitch, duration, dynamic, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and notation. Key vocabulary is specified on progression documents.

Implementation

At all stages of their primary education, children learn to apply their knowledge in practical music-making activities. In years 3 and 4, children have whole class instrumental lessons with specialist teachers from Services for Education. These teachers integrate skills in playing, singing, listening, appraisal, reading notation, improvisation and composition through the teaching of their specific instrument. In year 3, children learn the recorder and in year 4, children learn ukulele, tabla or keyboard. Children can continue to improve their playing and performance skills using this instrument by electing to carry on with lessons in years 5 and 6 during elective clubs.

Skills in singing are developed from reception to year 6 through weekly singing assemblies, also taught by a subject specialist. Singing as part of a large group can also be beneficial for children's wellbeing, but children will also develop skills in their listening skills, and develop their use of the interrelated dimensions of music during these sessions. All children at Clifton have the opportunity to build their confidence of performing through class assemblies and instrumental concerts.

In other year groups, children continue to build on their skills in playing, singing, listening, appraisal, improvisation and composition through lessons taught using the Charanga software and units of work. Charanga is a scheme of work, which offers a topic-based approach to support children's learning in music. A steady progression plan has been built into Charanga, both within each year and from one year to the next, ensuring consistent musical development. By using Charanga as the basis of a scheme of work, we can ensure that they are fulfilling the aims for musical learning stated in the National Curriculum:

Charanga includes many examples of music styles and genres from different times and places. These are explored through the language of music via active listening, performing and composing activities, which enable understanding of the context and genre. Charanga provides a classroom-based, participatory and inclusive approach to music learning. Throughout the scheme, children are actively involved in using and developing their singing voices, using body percussion and whole body actions, and learning to handle and play classroom instruments effectively to create and express their own and others' music. Through a range of whole class, group and individual activities, children have opportunities to explore sounds, listen actively, compose and perform.

Progression through the units of work in Charanga reinforces knowledge and use of the interrelated dimensions of music, so that awareness of these is built upon each year as the children move up through the school. Charanga units used at Clifton have been selected to both expose children to a wide range of genres and traditions, as well as to appeal to their interests and encourage enthusiastic participation in lessons.