

Music



Intent, Implementation, Impact

Intent

“Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful.”(Plato, Republic)

“There is no complete spiritual life without music, for the human soul has regions which can be illuminated only by music.” (Zoltán Kodály)

- At Medway, we believe that all children should have access to a high quality musical education. Music is one of the key drivers in our efforts to broaden our children’s cultural capital by exposing them to composers and compositions that they might not otherwise encounter within their home learning environment.
- We limit the barriers to children’s experimentation with Music within the home learning environment by using freely available platforms that they can easily access outside school.
- We believe that Music is an essential component of the holistic development of our children. It allows them to express themselves creatively and we recognise the practical benefits it provides for children’s health, wellbeing and spiritual growth.
- We aim to ensure that our children’s music-making activities are purposeful by embedding their learning of Music within the topics they study.
- We also believe that success in Music will empower children and increase their confidence in learning across all curriculum subjects.

Implementation

- We use music as a key driver for our initiative to enrich the cultural capital of our children by exposing them to compositions that they are not likely to encounter within their home learning environment.
- We believe that music is for everyone. We have built seamless integration between Music and ICT to harness our children's skills as digital natives to make music accessible to every child. The prevalence of technology is linked to our efforts to broaden our children's cultural capital. We know that a large majority of our children come from disadvantaged backgrounds where access to musical instruments or tuition might not be widely available to them. Hence, we use freely available online platforms and applications so that children can continue exploring and enjoying music within their home learning environment. (Purple Mash; Google Chrome Music Lab; GarageBand)
- We don't use an external scheme of work. Instead, we place our trust in our teachers and give them autonomy and independence to create lessons from start to finish. This gives teachers more ownership of the content they are teaching and avoids constraining their and their children's creativity.

- Following on from the earlier point, not using an external scheme of work allows us to ensure that there are meaningful connections between the various subjects being studied. This, in turn, provides an immersive learning experience to students whereby they develop a broader understanding of the central topics being studied. (Mayan Music in Y2; Egyptian Music in Y3; Creating national identities through Music and DT Y6)
- The deep and meaningful cross-curricular links also gives the students a sense of purpose for the music they compose. Composition is linked to other aspects of the curriculum to ensure that there is a purposeful rationale for the tasks performed by children. (Composing suspense music in Y4)

Impact

Music evidence across the school is strong and shows great potential. Each year group is teaching the required amount of Music lessons (some teach the content in blocks; others teach the subject weekly or biweekly). All strands of the Music curriculum (listening, performing, composing and the history of Music) are being given an equal weighting, providing the children with a highly engaging curriculum. Alongside this, Music is used as a key driver to broadening the children's cultural capital.

- EYFS: Music in this phase is used partly to overcome the children's extremely limited vocabulary (one of the biggest challenges in this age group). Children sing songs that help them acquire and retain new vocabulary. Additionally, children are exposed to rhymes focused on emotions in order to increase their emotive lexicon. Children are also encouraged to explore different instruments.
- Year 1: the year starts with a focus on singing in the Autumn term, where various elements of music (eg pitch and tempo) are introduced to the children through short, simple songs. In Autumn 2, the children have a chance to explore various instruments. In Spring 1, they respond to Music through dance and in Spring 2 the focus is on chanting. The summer term includes a cross-curricular ICT and Music module.
- Year 3: a wide variety of concepts is covered in this year group, ranging from listening to various pieces of Music related to the learning taking place in other foundation subjects. Strong evidence of SMSC was also seen in books. An example of this was an emotion graph where the children could show how their feelings changed whilst listening to a piece of Music.
- Year 4: the evidence that was presented was of a high quality in the context of this year group however a large chunk of learning that took place earlier in the year was not evidenced in the books due to it being taught by teaching assistants and covid related staff absences. The children undertook a considerable amount of musical learning with 'Orchestra Unwrapped' which included recalling pieces of music (aural memory), identifying what idea might be represented within a particular piece of music and timbre.
- Year 5: strong evidence of Music coverage was seen in books. Children composed a chord progression, which was notated using a staff. Following the composition task, children performed this to their peers and evaluated their work collectively. Elsewhere, culturally significant pieces of Music linked to the children's novel are used to build the vocabulary they need for their English writing. For example, the children analysed sombre, foreboding music before writing a setting description in which they needed to create those same emotions.
- Year 6: this year group showed a good balance between the teaching of musical concepts and the use of music for vocabulary building. The children created their own original compositions collectively after having learnt about scales. What sets this year group apart from the others is the use of QR codes to bring the children's compositions to life.