The importance of music

Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. A high-quality music education should engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they should develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon. (National Curriculum 2014)

Rationale

The teaching of music can contribute to learning across the curriculum. For example, music provides opportunities to promote:

- **spiritual development** through developing pupils’ awareness of the power of music to take the listener out of the commonplace and helping pupils use music to express and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings;
- **moral development** through helping pupils exercise responsibility in the choices and decisions they and others make as part of the creative process, valuing their own and others’ work and recognising the effect of music (for example, its uses in advertising and propaganda, and its misuse in sound pollution);
- **social development** through helping pupils share music-making and develop a sense of social cohesion, recognising the value of different contributions and their own responsibility to support and enrich the work of others, and recognising the need for different roles in group performance;
- **cultural development** through helping pupils recognise how music influences and reflects the way people think and feel, relating music to the time and place in which it was created and performed, and through analysing, evaluating and reflecting on
music from contrasting traditions and identifying how and why some aspects change or stay the same.

Music provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **communication** through presenting music to different audiences and discussing and sharing ideas with others;
- **application of number** through recognising pattern, sequence, order and rhythmic relationships;
- **ICT** through using a range of ICT to compose and perform music;
- **working with others** through taking different roles and recognising and supporting the different contributions of others in groups and ensemble work;
- **improving own learning and performance** through appraising their own work, recognising the need for perseverance, developing the ability to use time effectively, and increasing their ability to work independently;
- **problem-solving** through achieving intentions when composing and presenting performances to different audiences and in different venues.

**Aims**

The national curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils:

- perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians;
- learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence;
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.
Music teaching and learning at Bridgewater

‘Music is our daily medicine which aids far better communication with others and ourselves.’ (Evelyn Glennie OBE, percussionist.)

At Bridgewater we are committed to providing a rich range of musical experiences for our children during their time in school and all children in the school have access to the music curriculum through weekly music lessons.

We use the 2014 National Curriculum objectives as the starting point of our planning in Music. Music Express is used throughout the school as a basis for music teaching, as it provides coverage of all National Curriculum objectives and ensures progression in key skills. In this way, children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school.

This is supported by ‘Charanga,’ a web-based primary music scheme for the delivery of the new music curriculum. This offers a variety of approaches, including topic-based work, instrument tuition, skills-based work etc, and is endorsed by our local music hub: Music Partnership North.

We also offer our children the opportunity to study an instrument through the ‘Band in a Box’ scheme, again delivered by Music Partnership North.

Our children also have one year’s tuition in the tin whistle, usually in year 4, delivered by a local peripatetic teacher.

There are opportunities for the children from year 3 upwards to sing in our popular choir, which is led by a specialist singing teacher.

We offer guitar tuition in an after-school club for children who are keen to learn.
Progression

In the early years foundation stage, music is an important part of the curriculum and is planned according to objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. Musical aspects of the children’s work contribute to the child’s personal and social development. Counting songs foster a child’s mathematical ability and songs from different cultures increase a child’s knowledge and understanding of the world. Children express and communicate their ideas using songs and musical instruments.

In key stage one, pupils listen carefully and respond physically to a wide range of music. They play musical instruments with increasing control and sing a variety of songs from memory, adding accompaniments and creating short compositions with increasing confidence, imagination and control. They enjoy exploring how sounds and silence can create different moods and effects.

During key stage two, pupils sing songs and play instruments with increasing confidence, skill, expression and awareness of their own contribution to a group or class performance. They improvise and develop their own musical compositions, in response to a variety of different stimuli with increasing personal involvement, independence and creativity. They explore their thoughts and feelings through responding physically, intellectually and emotionally to a variety of music from different times and cultures. As mentioned above, years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to take part in a ‘band in a box’ experience provided by the Newcastle Music Service. Each year group receives half a term’s tuition in a particular type of music (e.g. flamenco and samba) to enrich the music curriculum and to enable the children to gain enjoyment and expertise in playing an instrument.

The School Choir

Singing lies at the heart of good music teaching and learning, and we have a thriving school choir made up of children from years 3-6. The choir is run by a specialist music teacher, which means that our children have access to a high level of expertise in singing teaching. The school choir is timetabled for one practice per week, and they
perform in our school productions as well as going carol singing in the local community and old people’s homes at Christmas time.

Each year our choir participates in ‘The Big Sing’ at the Sage Gateshead, which is a chance for many primary schools across the region to get together and celebrate singing in a big way. They learn a selected repertoire of songs and have a workshop in school to prepare them for the experience. This is a very uplifting and exciting event.

Inclusion

At Bridgewater we recognise that there are children of widely differing musical abilities in all classes and we provide learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. This is done in a variety of ways:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty (not all children complete all tasks).
- Grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group.
- Providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child.
- Using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

All staff who teach music are made aware of any children who are on the special needs register and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and this is borne in mind when planning for any particular class.

Themed weeks

Our popular themed weeks are a rich opportunity for additional music teaching and learning outside the normal curriculum; for example, we have had salsa dancing, African drumming, a Spanish play including Spanish songs, Bastille Day when the children learned French songs, etc.
The contribution of music teaching in other curriculum areas

English – Music encourages children to listen carefully for specific purposes and to articulate responses. Singing songs develops children’s language skills by focusing attention to rhythm, rhyme, diction and meaning. By working with others in a musical setting, children develop their ability to communicate ideas effectively.

Mathematics – by studying the structure of music, children are observing patterns and processes. Rhythm in music has a mathematical basis, and counting and recording beats in a piece of music reveals mathematical structures.

ICT – older pupils can use programmes such as ‘Audacity’ to compose music, and the City Learning Centre provides resources for children to explore synthesised music (‘Synth Studio’).

PSHE and Citizenship – by making music in groups, children learn to work effectively with others and they learn the importance of good working relationships. Making and performing music builds self confidence and often allows pupils who are not academically gifted to shine. Working together on a performance can be one of the most memorable things a child does in his or her time at school. Also, music gives children a vehicle for exploring feelings in a unique and safe way.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – listening to, creating or performing music can sometimes be a moving or even spiritual experience. Singing in church at Easter and Christmas are both examples of this. By studying the music of other cultures, children can develop more positive attitudes towards other cultures and societies that may be very different to their own.

MFL – one of the best ways to teach a foreign language is to learn songs in the language, as children remember vocabulary more readily when they have learned a song using the vocabulary.

Resources

The school is well stocked with a bank of musical instruments which were bought to support our ‘Soundstart’ programme.
We have access to ‘Charanga,’ the online music scheme, which provides a wealth of resources to use in class, including many music clips from a variety of times and musical traditions for listening and appraising.

We also have a collection of CDs, stored in the music cupboard, which are accessible to all staff as required.

A collection of music books is held in the music cupboard as an extra resource for teachers to dip into, and each class teacher has a copy of the Music Express scheme for their year group.

**Assessment**

Teachers assess children’s work in music by making informal judgements as they observe and listen to them during lessons. These judgements are used to plan subsequent lessons, ensuring development and progression of skills. Information about individual pupils can be recorded on planning and this can be checked by the music coordinator when doing planning scrutinies. We are now using Chris Quigley milestones to ensure progression in musical skills throughout the school.

**Monitoring and Review**

The quality and effectiveness of music teaching in school will be monitored by the Head Teacher by learning walks and the Music Coordinator by observation of lessons and scrutiny of planning. The work of the coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of music, being informed about current developments in the subject and attending or informing staff of all relevant training in the subject.

September 2014

Next review: 2017