

Intent, Implementation, Impact

Music at Priory School

Curriculum Intent

Purpose of study

“Learning about music and having the opportunity to play musical instruments and make music together is a vital part of a rich and rounded education.”

(Department of Education, National Plan for Music Education 2023) Making music together helps to foster a secure sense of belonging and working as one towards the same goal. The children learn to trust and support one another in this collaboration and are then rewarded with a sense of pride and achievement when they share the results of their hard work.

“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.” (Department of Education, National Curriculum) At Priory School, our aim is to provide a rounded music curriculum, providing opportunities and experiences that will inspire each child to reach their full potential in music. They are encouraged to enjoy singing, playing, composing and performing both in class and to a wider audience.

Our curriculum is broad and diverse, encompassing structured progression using a spiral model to return to and build on core skills and vocabulary year on year. We listen and respond to a variety of music in order to foster a love and appreciation of many styles and genres and develop a concept of how music has changed through history.

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.

Implementation

At Priory School, each mainstream class from Nursery to Y6 receives a weekly music lesson delivered by the specialist music teacher. This ensures continuity and a clear progression of skills from Foundation Stage through Key Stages 1 and 2. All classes sing in their music lessons and have a performance opportunity at least once per year to parents. As they move through the school, the range and complexity of songs progresses, leading towards a high quality whole year-group musical production put on by Year 6 just before they move on to secondary.

Musical instruments are used in class to reinforce concepts of rhythm and pitch, together with action songs and body percussion. Our younger children explore simple hand percussion, making use of it for special effects, to keep the pulse of the song, or to echo back short rhythms. By Year 2 the children are reading simple graphic scores, ready to move on to reading standard rhythm notation (using Kodaly rhythm words), and then introducing pitch notation through the use of colour coded chime bars in Year 3. In Year 4 this is developed with a unit learning to play recorder. Ukulele facilitates further understanding of chords for Year 5, and in Year 6 keyboards and xylophones are used to improvise, compose and notate their own melodies.

At KS2, families are also offered the opportunity to purchase individual or small group instrumental lessons for their children, from a variety of visiting peripatetic music teachers offering violin, clarinet, flute, guitar, ukulele, keyboard, piano and drum kit. During composition units where a variety of instruments are made available, children who have further skills on a particular instrument are encouraged to bring it into class for these sessions and “join up” their musical learning experiences.

Impact

The impact of the Music curriculum at Priory School can be seen in our children, who enjoy and engage with the music curriculum from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2. They show appreciation for a wide range of musical genres, expressing the things they have noticed about it and the impact it has had on them, using both their knowledge and imagination. Children perform with self-belief and musicality, singing and playing instruments with confidence and enthusiasm, improvising and sharing their carefully crafted compositions, and listening carefully to one another. Children develop skills progressively through their years at the Priory, in line with National Curriculum guidelines and expectations.