

Music – Mrs G. Powton

“Ah, music” he said, wiping his eyes. “A magic beyond all we do here!”

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*.

What are the aims of Music?

At Newton Hall Infants’ School, we value the role that music plays in children’s development. We believe that exposure to music and taking part in music making from a young age enriches the lives of our pupils. It can build self-confidence in our children, aiding their teamwork and communication skills.

We deliver a music curriculum that is engaging and inclusive for all of our children.

We aim to:

- provide regular opportunities to listen to high quality live and recorded music
- encourage children to ‘feel’ musical elements such as pulse, rhythm, pitch and dynamics through movement activities and games
- familiarise our children with a range of tuned and untuned instruments
- encourage our children to experiment and improvise sounds using percussion instruments and replicate those they have heard in listening activities
- provide opportunities for our children to perform music for themselves and others
- create a welcoming environment where children can share their own musical preferences
- give our children a singing repertoire that is both progressive and fun.

How is the content chosen?

Listening activities are central to music lessons and they ensure that pupils build both musical knowledge and cultural capital. Musical content is chosen from a range of genres (e.g. Western Classical, World, Pop, Rock and Folk), by different artists and from different time periods. Chosen music and performances also highlights a range of instruments so that children are introduced to different timbres (the distinct quality of sound made by a specific instrument).

Singing repertoire is chosen to allow children to sing a number of simple folk tunes that take into account the range of their young voices. They are given opportunities to sing with accompaniment or acapella (without accompaniment). Individual songs are used to achieve a specific aim within a lesson. A song will be repeated within a lesson and across a series of consecutive lessons in order that the children become familiar with the song and they are able to extend their learning.

How do we ensure progression of knowledge and skills?

In Key Stage One, we use the *Primary Music Curriculum and Progress Map* from Durham Music Service as a basis for our planning. This reflects the building blocks (pulse, rhythm and melody) that run through the four strands of learning our lessons are structured around:

- Active Listening
- Composing and Improvising
- Performing
- Singing

The *Progress Map* expands on the content in the National Curriculum so that expected outcomes for pupils in Key Stage 1 are clear and prescriptive for each year group.

We have communicated and worked collaboratively with outside subject specialists to ensure that we offer excellent progression throughout our school. As a result, our long term, medium term and short term planning is sequenced to ensure appropriate content for specific year groups in terms of skills and, in singing, vocal range.

How is Music taught?

Music is taught at Newton Hall Infants' through discrete weekly lessons. Each lesson includes time for active listening and movement linked to specific learning objectives. Pupils build their recognition of specific musical elements such as pulse, dynamics, tempo and time signatures through repetition and by comparing extracts from different pieces of music.

Our children become composers through imitating and improvising rhythms in clapping and body percussion games. This also aids their development as performers.

Singing activities are central to music lessons here. Our children become familiar with a number of simple songs and rhymes that are chosen both to achieve particular learning outcomes and to engage our children's interest.

Children are also taught a number of singing games and rhymes which have benefits across the curriculum including:

- social and listening skills
- spatial awareness and coordination
- memory
- fluency of speech
- language

Singing is also used by teachers to aid memory and recall in other subjects as well as at transition times throughout the school day.

How is Music taught in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

At Newton Hall Infants' we use *Musical Development Matters in the Early Years* by Nicola Burke as the basis for music lessons and music opportunities within the continuous provision.

"All vocal communication is comprised of musical elements such as pitch rhythm and timbre, demonstrating that musicality is an intrinsic part of being human".

Nicola Burke

Musical Development Matters highlights four key areas of musical development:

- Hearing and Listening
- Vocalising and Singing
- Moving and Dancing
- Exploring and Playing

Opportunities to build skills in all four areas are provided in music lessons and within the wider environment and continuous provision. Resources from group activities are used in the continuous provision to aid the children's memories and to encourage spontaneous singing and music making. Musical instruments are available in the environment for children to generate their own music in a creative way.

When children enter the school in Reception, we take their previous musical experiences into account and we're keen to find out what songs and rhymes are familiar and important to them. We use this as a starting point to plan meaningful and progressive musical opportunities within a nurturing atmosphere.

How do we know that our children are making progress?

Ongoing assessments of the children's knowledge and skills are observed weekly by the class teacher. Misconceptions are addressed and next steps carefully planned. Children's outcomes are compared to the subject specific skills and knowledge documents, as well as the year group expectations from the National Curriculum or EYFS Framework. Senior leaders and subject leaders gather an overview of children's learning and outcomes through monitoring activities. Regular assessments are collated for children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 which are used to plan appropriate next steps for their future learning, as well as provide an overview of learning within subjects across the whole school. Progress is monitored closely by subject leaders and senior management.

Impact of our Music teaching

At Newton Hall Infants' School, we recognise the immense benefits of immersing children in music and singing. This allows our children to first develop an unconscious understanding of musical concepts that blossoms into musical literacy as they gain confidence in naming musical elements using accurate vocabulary.

Teaching music in this way builds cultural capital, strengthens our children's self-esteem and encourages participation at a pace that suits the unique needs of individuals. Children are able to express their own musical preferences and ideas in an inclusive environment.

"We are all musical; we just need the opportunity."

G. Welch (2017), quoted by Zoe Greenhalgh in 'Music and Singing in the Early Years: A Guide to Singing with Young Children' (2018).