

Charlton Kings Infants' School

William Congreve once said that “music has charms to soothe the savage beast, to soften rocks or bend a knotted oak”.

National Curriculum

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.

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 – key stage 1

Subject content Key stage 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- ♣ use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
- ♣ play tuned and un-tuned instruments musically
- ♣ listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
- ♣ experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.

CKIS Singing Strategy

Why singing is important?

Physical benefits

- Young children have been shown to increase the amount, quality and understanding of speech developed through singing activities
- Singing increases blood flow and lung capacity
- Singing triggers feel-good chemicals in the brain
- Singing together regulates breathing and causes your heart rate to synchronise with everyone else in the group
- Combined with movement or dance, singing can help increase general physical fitness, developing motor skills and hand/eye coordination

Social benefits

- Singing can directly influence school improvement through creating a greater sense of community and increasing social cohesion
- Singing as a group can help with discipline to take turns, being a leader and a follower
- Singing in school can help develop individuality, improved social skills and help create more positive attitudes in general.
- Singing can lift our mood through evoking positive emotions
- Singing as a group gives children confidence and boosts self-esteem

Developmental benefits

- Singing can be used to start or finish activities such as settling down for the register or signifying the end of the school day
- Singing can be used to reinforce mathematical development through the use of finger and counting games and exploration of musical instruments and sound-makers through sequencing and patterning
- Through singing activities, very young children have been shown to increase the amount, quality and understanding of speech
- Singing is excellent at improving our memory through remembering lyrics, pitch and rhythm which in turn can be a tool to aid us to remember any subject efficiently

Beliefs

At CKIS we want all children to have access to good quality singing opportunities every week. We believe singing is a truly inclusive musical activity that can be enjoyed by all and that singing has a huge benefit to the well-being of our children.

Aims

- We will have a singing assembly as a whole school once a week.
- Staff to join in with singing in assemblies
- Singing is to be encouraged to explore topics covered in each year group.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to sing songs in a variety of genres: hymns, musicals, popular, jazz, Disney soundtracks etc and in a variety of styles.
- All classes to endeavour to sing a song together at some point each day and songs to support learning in maths and English.
- Y2 are able to join the school choir. They will learn new songs and help lead the school in singing each week in our singing assembly.
- The school will aim to showcase their singing through participation in ... carol services, class assemblies, school concerts, Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, singing in the community etc

Resources

- 'Sparkyard' and 'Sing Up!'
- Numerous singing books to be used in whole school worship and within classrooms
- Some singing books to support English and maths

Events

- Whole school Harvest Festival
- Carol Service in each year group
- Christmas carol singing in the local community
- Cheltenham Competitive Festival (if appropriate)

<https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-views/music-invaluable-resource-when-it-comes-childrens-mental-health-and>

Voice production

If you can speak, you can sing!

Everyone is born with the right elements to achieve this but we are all born with voices that are unique to us. Singing is an extension of our speaking voice- Air passing from our lungs with control from the diaphragm, over our vocal folds to produce a sound. It is then shaped by our tongue, lips and teeth. With the right control, breath support and focus, we move from speaking to what we know as our singing voice.

Creating a safe space

Singing is a personal activity and each singer need to feel safe and secure before they are able to relax and let go. Creating a safe environment is very important to achieve this. Nominating children to sing solos in the first few sessions may create singers that will feel insecure. Therefore, singing together is important to establish a safe experience. They will also develop their ability to successfully blend their voices over time and in turn, children will feel brave enough to try solo singing.

Teaching by ear

Teaching by ear or 'by rote' is a good method to use. This will allow singers to learn the sing with ease and allow the singers to enjoy the songs for its own sake. Later, it is encouraged to take elements of each song for musicianship elements such as highlighting pitch, rhythm, tempo, dynamics etc. It is encouraged to teach songs short phrases at a time and repeat as much as needed until the desired aim is achieved.

Developing aural skills

Some children find singing on the right pitch very easy, but for some, tuning can be something they are not able to demonstrate yet. Children who struggle with tuning usually haven't developed the skill of listening to their own voice. Developing this skill will mean they will be able to analyse their own pitch enough to make changes to their tuning, recognising if notes need to be higher or lower. Singers should listen to the note(s) sung which will allow them to use their short term memory. They should then try to reproduce them against the sound they make with their singing voice. They should listen to the sound coming from their mouth and their ears should make a judgment whether the notes they heard is on the same

TIPS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT SONG

Vocal range

Children need to sing songs that are within their natural vocal range. There will be a few children who are naturally able to reach high and if those notes are required

to be long and sustained, it takes good vocal technique to maintain the sound. Keys of songs are also worth bearing in mind as most popular songs are sung by adults with wider ranges. Be aware of children 'reaching up' (too high) or 'pushing down' (too low) for the notes with their chin and neck.

Melody

Melodies which move by step or in small regular repeated patterns are easily achievable for young children. Upper Key Stage 2 may find songs with leaps easier, as their voices are beginning to mature by Year 5/6. However, be aware that all singing should have a sense of accuracy and this is easily achievable if the songs are moving by step.

Lyrics

Lyrics works best when there is a lot of repetition rather than lengthy verses with complex words. Not only will this help children with general literacy but will also help speech and language development with EAL children.

Rhythm

Using songs with simple steady rhythms will be easier to master. Look for songs where rhythm patterns are repeated- Singers tend to repeat rhythms they heard the first time.

Accompaniments and CD backing tracks

CD backing tracks can be very useful. Non specialist music teachers who aren't able to accompany on an instrument such as a piano or guitar can find backing tracks a great tool to accompany the children. It also brings a nice touch for backing tracks to be used for a performance. However, in a rehearsal, it is easier for the children to listen, learn and copy a melody when it is unaccompanied so they are able to develop their intonation and tuning.

Glossary:

Pulse: The heart beat that runs throughout a piece of music

Rhythm: Syllables from lyrics, singing long and short notes

Pitch: Melody which consists of singing high and low

Tempo: Speed of a song

Solfa: Pitch names such as Do, Re, Me, Fa, So

Dynamics: Volume of the voice

Piano: Quiet

Mezzo Forte: Moderately loud

Forte: Loud