

Music

Intent

At Manchester Communication Primary Academy (MCPA), we believe that high-quality music provision will inspire children to think innovatively and develop their innate creativity and curiosity in a way that is inclusive to every child. We believe that as the children progress in their learning, they should be able to think critically and creatively, developing an in-depth understanding of music. We believe that children should know and understand how music and drama reflect and shape our history, and how these arts contribute to the future and creativity of society and the world around us.

Within music, children are expected to be reflective practitioners, constantly evaluating and improving their work in order to keep moving forward in their learning and perform to the best of their ability. We strive for this to be a meaningful and continuous process, that is increasingly pupil-led further up in the school and that evidences developmental-related reflection. Children gain a good understanding of music through the structure of our music lessons - our lessons contain the key elements of listening, singing, playing, evaluating, analysing and composing across different musical genres and periods.

Our curriculum introduces and teaches key skills at appropriate ages, in ways that encourage pupils to explore their own creativity and perspective on the world. By creating a safe and nurturing environment, pupils are encouraged to take creative risks and to learn from their creative journey, rather than focus entirely on an end destination or final 'product'.

Here at MCPA we recognise that music stimulates creativity and imagination; it provides visual, tactile and sensory experiences and a unique way of understanding, and responding to, the world.

Implementation

Our music curriculum has a clear sequence of lessons that ensures children can sing, play, compose, improvise, perform and evaluate. At MCPA, we use 'Sing Up' to deliver a high quality music education, which helps us to ensure that learning is deep and transferable year on year and ensures curriculum coverage and progression.

Children build on and revisit their key skills and knowledge each year - for example, they are gradually introduced to the inter-related dimensions of music and become more competent discussing these year-on-year.

The curriculum also allows for trips and visits that will further enhance the children's learning experiences - for example, each year Year 5 attend The Big Sing at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, Reception attend the EYFS Celebration, Year 2 and Year 5 attend Sing Arounds and the year 5 and 6 choir are invited to Young Voices.

We also have teachers who teach particular instruments, such as the ukulele through our Music Hub One Education and rock band instruments with RockSteady, as an extra addition on top of our provision for 'Sing Up'. Instrumental teaching builds on from previous learning and helps to develop children's understanding of notation, as well as playing in solo and ensemble contexts.

Pupils' creative work can be played to them, shared on School Spider, and celebrated within their classes and within the whole school to ensure that music is given a high status within the school. This includes performances by our RockSteady bands and choirs at our school fayres.

The teaching and implementation of MCPA's music curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and provides a well-structured approach to the study of music. Staff subject knowledge is supported by our music lead and links to MCA (our partner high school).

Impact

Through our music curriculum, we strive to create a supportive and collaborative ethos for learning by providing investigative and creative learning opportunities. Emphasis is placed on collaborative exploratory learning to support children in developing coherent knowledge and understanding of each unit of work covered.

Our curriculum is of high quality, is well thought out and structured to demonstrate progression. Displays around the school, as well as celebration of skills online, reflect the children's sense of pride in their work and is also demonstrated by creative outcomes across the wider curriculum. We focus on progression of knowledge and skills with discreet vocabulary progression contributing to subject specific development.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Assessment of pupil discussion about their learning.
- Images and videos of the children's practical learning.
- Interviewing and conducting surveys for the pupils to reflect on their learning.
- Annual reporting of standards across the curriculum.
- Annual curriculum review and update.

Research

Music education for children is of fundamental importance. However, due to curriculum pressure, these subjects can often be marginalised in order to meet the increasing demands of English and Maths education. This was especially apparent after Covid (2020 – 2021) and the rhetoric that was surrounding 'catch up' within schools. However, it can be argued that it is because of this that the arts have become more important than ever before and curriculum time for these subjects should be protected.

One compelling argument can be heard from Susan Aykin, the National Lead for Visual and Performing Arts for Ofsted. She states, 'It's [...] important in [helping] them to access other areas of the curriculum [...] helps to consider and question the interpretive choices [...] that

musicians might make in composition, or the playing of an instrument [...] it's vitally important in creating a rounded human being.'

It is widely recognised that teaching creative subjects, such as music, teaches and develops skills other subjects do not. Skills which can then be utilised in all areas of life and learning. Eisner (2002) argues that there are five cognitive functions that 'the arts' gives us: the opportunity to really notice the world around us; the chance to engage our imagination by 'liberating us from the literal'; an ability to 'tolerate ambiguity' and promote subjectivity; a chance to inspect our own ideas as art is created; and the opportunity to 'discover our emotional selves'. It is through this that children can really start to discover their place in the world.

Whilst learning music is unarguably beneficial for individual development and cross-curricular skills, it is also important to consider the following quote from

<https://clpe.org.uk/blog/2018/why-drama-essentialtadays-classrooms>:
'The arts are a fundamentally important part of culture, and an education without them is an impoverished education leading to an impoverished society. Studying the arts should not have to be justified in terms of anything else... they are time-honored ways of learning, knowing, and expressing.'

Children should be taught to value these methods of expressing themselves and see them as equally important to any other subject. This is what we strive to achieve – to enable children to appreciate music for what it is and develop practical skills that they can take with them through life.