

Music Curriculum Statement

2020 - 2021

Intent

At Alverton we are passionate about singing, music and drama. Music threads its way throughout the whole school life of all children, in and out of the classroom, throughout the day and through discrete music lessons. Our aim is to expose children to a wide range of performers, musical styles and cultures, provide an understanding of how music is created, create real opportunities for musical performance and instil in children the confidence to develop their own taste.

Following our return to school in September 2020, we have needed to respond to the enforced absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Initial assessments have identified priority pupils and we have timetabled additional Basic Skills sessions to allow us to focus on our identified priorities, as well as increasing the focus on “gaps” during lessons. We are focusing particularly on key skills in Reading, Writing and Maths as well as a whole-school priority of children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Implementation

We place great importance on giving children a wide range of musical and dramatic experiences throughout their whole time at Alverton. Each year, all pupils take part in class sharing assemblies, Christmas performances and a number of community events. We take part in Cornish Music Hub events such as Songfest, performances at the Hall for Cornwall, theatre and dance workshops at the Minack Theatre as well as singing out in the community each Christmas. Alverton is known for its annual musical production which is extremely professional and plays to packed houses.

Singing is very highly valued at Alverton. We have a weekly singing assembly for the whole school, learning traditional hymns alongside a wide range of modern songs, run a Key Stage 2 choir which performs in and out of school and we also have a lunchtime singing club. Alongside organised singing activities, we use a PA system to encourage singing and dancing out on the playground and the children at our breakfast club regularly enjoys taking part in karaoke sessions. Each week, a different genre or artist is introduced and played as children enter school or during lunchtime and a dedicated music board provides information to support this. Our Key Stage 2 Christmas Carol Concert is a wonderful celebration of singing and music with a staff choir performing each year.

In addition to our love of singing, every class receives dedicated music lessons from their teacher alongside a skilled practitioner and musical expert which develops listening skills, composition, performance, understanding of simple music notation and appreciation of a range of music genres. We use the online Music Express scheme of work to provide a clear path of progression through the key stages. Every child has access to an iPad and Garage Band is used in Key Stage 2 to develop composition skills.

A number of peripatetic teachers provide paid tuition in guitar, violin, woodwind and drums and we provide time for those pupils and other instrumentalists to receive 1:1 and small group instrumental support from our music specialist in school. We have a ukulele lunchtime club and take part in the Cornish Music Hub whole class instrument lessons.

Our annual musical production gives pupils the opportunity to learn dances from a skilled choreographer and ex-performer as well as having singing tuition (often individually) from an expert singing teacher. The whole experience enmeshes children in a world of music, song, dance and performance and is unmissable for children in UKS2.

We build instrumental performance opportunities throughout the year for any child who wants to take part and work with peripatetic teachers to help pupils learn pieces that will be used in school. Bands are formed for events, for example Samba bands for Mazey or a string quartet to provide backing for a Beatles song. This fluid approach gives pupils with a wide scope of abilities the chance to perform and builds their confidence and motivation to learn an instrument. This access for all approach helps many children who need pastoral support to build their sense of self-esteem and confidence.

In the EYFS, children have access to percussion instruments in the learning environment. They are taught to follow a steady beat, create their own musical patterns and explore different sounds. Children are encouraged to listen carefully to the sounds that instruments make and to incorporate them into storytelling recitals. Children in the EYFS sing daily through transition songs, nursery rhymes and simple songs that are incorporated into their topic work.

Alverton School loves music. We invite bands to perform at our school fair, have teachers who wander through the school singing and play music whenever possible. However, we always aim to make it even better.

Following Covid-19, we have added Basic Skills sessions to our timetables. This has necessitated a small reduction in the time spent on foundation subjects but we have ensured that all children will still access a broad curriculum and have used opportunities to incorporate these subjects in, for example, reading sessions and writing opportunities.

We have had to make a number of adjustments in school to keep in line with government guidance and risk assessments, including:

- There is no whole key stage singing assembly (no assemblies currently being held).
- No singing in class - children can sing outdoors as long as they are socially distancing from each other.
- No woodwind instruments are being played in class e.g. recorder lessons.

To avoid singing, we have reviewed the music express lessons and picked units that are safe to teach - UKS2 are doing the ukulele unit (the school invested in extra ukuleles so we have a full class set). LKS2 are doing a beat and rhythm unit and KS1 are using percussion instruments.

Impact

We have achieved the Cornwall Gold Singing School Award for commitment to whole school vocal development.

Over the last three years, there has been a marked increase in the number of children learning an instrument with a peripatetic teacher or within school. Currently there are 75 children attending peripatetic music lessons. We now have performing groups of violins, ukuleles, keyboards and guitars who support whole school songs and choir performances.

The school choir has gone from strength to strength with numbers increasing each year; our current choir consists of 50 children from Years 3, 4 and 5. A new lunchtime club dedicated to song writing has begun.

About 50 children from Years 5 and 6 and a further 40 from Years 3 and 4 take part in our annual musical production which is of an exceptionally high standard. Please see https://alverton.eschools.co.uk/website/musical_productions_1/210026 for further details about these.

All school staff are involved in choosing the range of music from varied artists, composers and cultures which is played daily and which ensures that children are given the opportunity to experience a wide range of music which they might otherwise not encounter. Staff have the confidence to teach music using Music Express and understand key music terminology after CPD sessions.

A dedicated music space is being planned, an outdoor stage is about to be built and we are hoping to use these to give pupils and community musicians the chance to perform here during the summer term.