



MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION WEEKLY MUSIC CURRICULUM

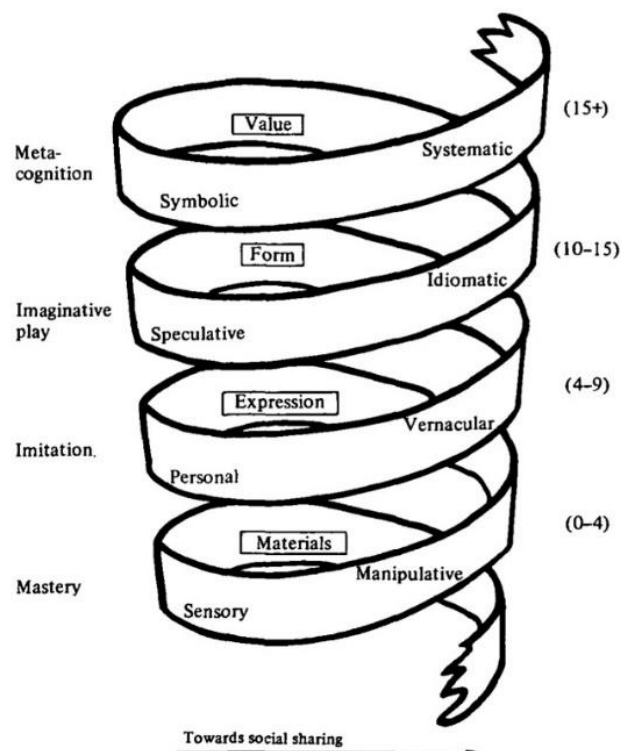
CLASS MUSIC LESSONS

Historically, music education has started with the symbol first, teaching music theory as a set of abstract ideas before key musical concepts and understanding are physically experienced if at all. This has led to the incorrect and often personally devastating and divisive belief that some people are musical and others are not, based on whether they can or cannot *read* music.

Our curriculum starts from the viewpoint that *all* children are inherently musical. We harness their innate joy and desire to make music and equip them gradually through fun experiential and multi-sensory singing-based musical learning, with increasingly more formal musical skills as they progress through the school. This is all based on a strong experiential understanding of music which forms the firm foundation for the next stage of their musical development.

A multi-sensory approach – sound before symbol – spiral model of musical development

All class music lessons are delivered using a multi-sensory, experiential approach to musical learning, drawing on the pedagogies of Kodaly, Orff and Dalcroze, underpinned by Odam's *Sound before Symbol* approach. The music curriculum is designed to actively engage children and enable them to learn through musical play at all stages of their musical development. Key concepts are revisited based on a spiral model of musical development (see below, after





Swanwick and Tillman) in line with best practice, which encourages the mastery of key skills and knowledge, explored across a range of different musical genres and activities, in increasing depth.

CURRICULUM PLANNING- CHALLENGE, OVERVIEW AND REVIEW

Each lesson is designed with high expectations and challenge for all and where music is the primary language. In **EYFS and Key Stage 1** lessons these are hidden in the songs and games and are not made explicit as a learning goal. In some **Key Stage 2** music lessons where appropriate, where learning goals are starting to become more explicit, lessons may have, where appropriate, three written challenges represented by bronze, silver and gold trophies displayed on the board. Each challenge demonstrates to the children the expected learning outcomes and helps them understand different levels of musical challenge and complexity. In these instances, we will review our progress at the end of the lesson. The children seem to respond well to the idea of different trophies and want to achieve gold. However, this is only used when needed and the main focus is always on getting straight into making music from the start of each lesson.

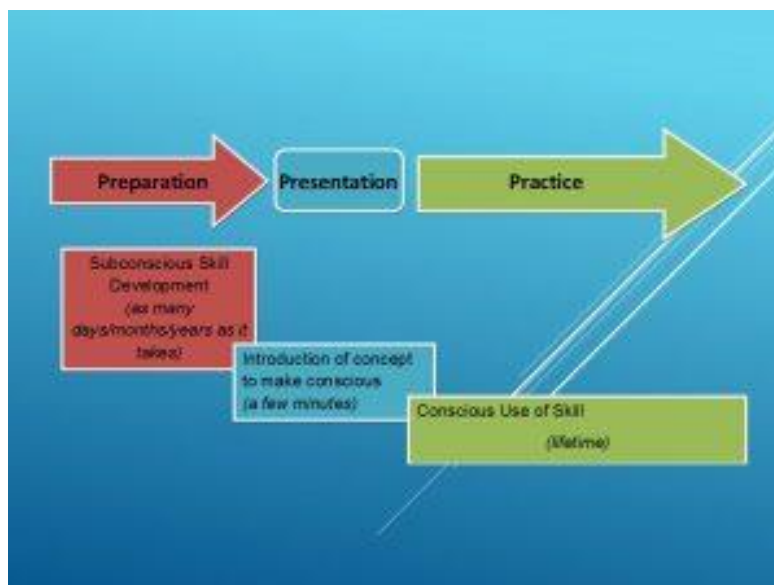
The music curriculum is reviewed on a half termly, termly and annual basis by the Music Lead, checking for progress against the plan, amending where needed. Children's learning in previous years informs the curriculum plan for the following year. In this way learning is sequential and progress reviewed in the short, medium and long term as children progress through the school.

A Curriculum Overview is produced each year detailing our plans for each half term of learning in every year group. It also provides an overview of the children's musical learning across the whole school at any particular time and provides evidence of their musical progression from informal to more formal learning over their school lives. As the Music Lead teaches all the children, she is able to have complete oversight over all the children's musical learning and their progress. The Curriculum Overview is flexible and can be adapted to allow for new opportunities as they arise and the organic development of music projects, such as seen in our Spoon playing which led on to the ongoing Joint Music and PE project, supported by Sports Premium funding.

A KODALY, MASTERY- BASED APPROACH

Every child has the opportunity to develop key foundational musicianship skills through highly scaffolded multi-sensory singing games and activities relevant to their age, interest and skill level, using the Kodaly pedagogical approach and current best practice across a range of genres.





In line with the pedagogical approach put forward by Zoltan Kodaly, key musical concepts are prepared, presented and practiced (the 3Ps - see diagram above), moving from one stage to another when the children are ready, ensuring mastery of each critical stage in their musical development.

SINGING AS OUR FIRST INSTRUMENT

Singing is at the heart of our school life and children are encouraged to sing:

- in every class music lesson - twice a week in EYFS and KS1
- with their class on a daily basis in support of their wider learning
- in our weekly class and collective Worships
- weekly Praise Worships (hymn practice)
- in whole school Masses and class Prayer Services
- and in our numerous termly school productions and class assemblies and prayer services.

As outlined in the Overview, In Year 4 (and Year 5 this year) children are introduced to the concept of **dramatic singing through opera** using the Royal Opera House's *Create and Explore* programme as a co-taught programme with the Year 4 and 5 drama specialists and the music specialist, who have all attended training at the Royal Opera House. We have performed Carmen and hope to stage either Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretl or Mozart's The Magic Flute in the coming academic year. Music and Drama Leads have participated and continue to participate in live and/or remote CPD sessions led by the Royal Opera House staff.

Formal musical learning – a notation-based approach

As children move into Key Stage 2 and learn the recorder in Year 3, we start to introduce more formal musical concepts, whilst still using a largely multi-sensory approach. Five-line stave notation is introduced gradually using a hand and floor stave, then one-line, two-line and three-line staves supported by the children's understanding of solfa singing names and stick notation gained during Key Stage 1. All children learn to read and write music using rhythmic solfa. In this way, stave notation is first introduced kinaesthetically as a floor and hand stave where children can explore the stave through real experiences such as jumping between the lines or stepping on the lines, singing tunes as a human melody and rhythm line or pointing



to their fingers on their hand stave as they sing solfa name; and not as an abstract concept on a printed page with learned note names. This approach directly supports our String Programme and individual instrumental lessons, which adopt a more formal approach to learning, using written notation and teacher-led approaches to music education.

We draw on all these different pedagogical approaches to ensure all children have a positive and progressive music education, which reflects their different learning styles, supports individual and collective musical interests and introduces new genres, instruments and challenges in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. In these different ways we ensure there is a clear and coherent sequence to children's musical learning over their primary years and that *all* children have the opportunity to make meaningful progress, and in so doing foster a strong musical identity and enjoyment of their music-making.

SCHEMES OF WORK AND RESOURCES

KODALY BASED RESOURCES

In **EYFS** and in **Years 1-4** we use the **Jolly Music programme** (Beginner to Level 2 Books) by David Vinden and Cyrilla Rowsell, both eminent Kodaly specialists, to help develop good musicianship skills through fun action-based musical games and critical listening activities. In the class-based music session we use the **First Thing Music** programme, which is very similar to Jolly Music but uses different songs, albeit with the same aims as the Jolly Music programme. This helps to increase the repertoire for the children and gives the class team a different set of 10 songs that are their's to use in class, developing ownership and confidence amongst staff and children. In **Years 5 and 6** we use the **Going for Bronze Scheme** published by the National Youth Choirs of Scotland, written by Lucinda Geoghegan, another outstanding Kodaly specialist who also helped to design the *First Thing Music* programme and associated teacher training.

Through frequent singing, children gradually build up a **song bank of memorised simple two and three note songs** (so-mi, then la-so-mi) initially which forms the basis for a range of musical learning activities in the following years. As children progress, so the songs become more complex melodically.

It is our intent that children develop **excellent critical listening skills** and in so doing, develop a **strong aural memory**, identifying similarities and differences in known songs and identifying rhythmic patterns and musical structure, singing in canon etc; all with potential impacts on children's phonological awareness and temporal processing, spelling and literacy skills. Indeed, being able to keep a steady beat has been found to be a predictor of later reading ability.

Multi-sensory resources are selected and used, ranging from the use of puppets and scarves, tactile equipment such as bouncy balls and parachutes, visual aids, tuned and untuned percussion instruments, through to beatboxing, body percussion and music technology. Children from the youngest age through to Year 6, work individually and collectively within the class, leading the class or working together as a whole class, or in pairs with their learning partner or in small groups.





With this strong aural and musical foundation, children in **Key Stage 2** develop and deepen their musical learning in a variety of ways, still centred on singing and **the Kodaly approach**, but in much greater depth. There is also a greater emphasis on expressing this learning more formally through **individual and class instrumental lessons, an introduction to different forms of notation, and composition and improvisation.**

Children use their Song Bank built up through EYFS and Key Stage 1 as the resource to play the songs they already know initially on the recorder, and **start to make explicit their musical understanding in written, verbal and notated forms.** Starting with rhythm names and singing names and Solfa hand signs children progress to reading and writing simple stick notation and eventually the full stave through a Kodaly based approach to the recorder. Children are able to express their understanding of pulse and rhythm in more complex patterns, using their critical ear and aural skills to discern differences in rhythmic patterns, identify musical structures and create their **own short musical improvisations or compositions (see below).**

Children in **Year 3 learn the recorder** using a Kodaly approach and are very gradually introduced to **stave notation** in a multi-sensory experiential way outlined above, using their knowledge of Solfa developed in Key Stage 1, which is transferred onto one line, then two-line staves and so on, singing and playing as they go. Musicianship skills continue to be developed through fun musical singing and action games but in contrast to Key Stage 1, the musical aim is made more explicit. Children are encouraged to use musical vocabulary as they explain what they hear and describe the musical processes at work.

In **Year 4** all children learn a **string instrument** as part of the **Southern Pro Musica Schools' Strings Programme** in addition to their class music lesson. In **Year 4**, children are introduced to the **art of dramatic singing and opera** with the support of the **Royal Opera House Create and Sing programme**, which is co-led and co-taught by the Music Lead and Year 4 teachers (drama specialists) in class music lessons. This culminates in a year group performance.

All children learn the **ukulele in Year 5** as part of their class music lessons using the **Musical Futures** ukulele programme which incorporates rock, funk and pop grooves to support learning using an informal approach to musical learning where children start with genres or tunes they already know and enjoy. Children learn to read and play from chord symbols and tab notation. They compose their own riffs and notate them using tab and perform to the class. This is supported by YouTube play alongs such as Ukulaliens and Music with Mr Gray, designed for children by school music teachers.

Children in **Year 6** learn to play the **djembe**s and read rhythm grids. They continue to learn to play respectfully as an ensemble and become aware of the social nature and history of this music making, where the Drum Master leads the rhythms and shapes the collective sound. All children also have **access to a full range of peripatetic instrumental lessons provided by Surrey Arts** in school or online if necessary. Children also have the opportunity to **participate in a year group production every year as they move through Key Stage 2 at Christmas.** Additionally, Year 5 stage an annual performance of the Passion Play at Easter and in Year 6 a musical at the end of the year.





CREATIVE WORK: IMPROVISING AND COMPOSING

Children have opportunities to compose or improvise in every lesson ranging from the informal leading of a pulse action of their choice in Early Years, through to formal notated rhythms and melodies in later years. Since the introduction of our twice-weekly music lessons, our younger children are making rapid progress in their musicianship skills, which is evident in the number of children composing their own rhythms and songs - a direct outcome of our focus on listening to *the way the words go*. One example of this was the spontaneous composition of a two note song about rainbows by a Year 2 pupil using a structure learnt in our simple two note songs. He performed his song at our Autumn Concert, supported by our Junior Singing Squad and a plethora of rainbow scarves. Other examples include children writing their own rhymes or sentences and then notating them in stick notation at home in their own time.

The children love to share their work with the class which inspires others. These examples highlight the accessibility of this approach for young children and the important personal musical outcomes that can be achieved by a wide range of children and not just a privileged few. In this direct way the children's literacy skills are also being supported and encouraged by their Kodaly-based musical learning.

Our School Concert Band uses a jazz-based approach which encourages children to learn tunes by ear and improvise through jazz and folk music-making, alongside notated 'Heads' using staff, tab or chord notation as needed. This enables all children to participate at a level relevant to their current ability. It also provides challenge for children reading music who are not used to improvising or learning by ear, and challenge for those who haven't yet encountered staff, tab or chord notation.

INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING

As already mentioned, children have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments at different points in their school career.

Children in **EYFS and in Key Stage 1** are introduced to a range of *untuned and tuned percussion instruments* which support their learning about pulse, rhythm and pitch. These include: spoons, cups, shakers, claves, bells and chime bars. They also have access to scarves for use when moving to music, critical listening and expressive activities.

Children in **Key Stage 2** are taught the *recorder* in Year 3, the *Southern Pro Musica Schools String Programme* in Year 4 (and recorders this year as catch up post lockdown), *ukuleles* in Year 5 and 6 (catch up) and *djembe*s in Year 6 as whole class instrumental learning led by the school's music specialist.

Surrey Arts provide individual and small group lessons across most instrumental groups and age range. We now have woodwind lessons to provide a clear progression route from class recorder learning.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

As outlined above we hope to add music technology increasingly to our provision so children can develop keyboard skills in composition, and skills in DJ-ing, audio recording and





production. We hope to organise a music tech workshop for our Year 6 children with our secondary school colleagues within the Trust.

GOING DEEPER

Children are encouraged to improvise in every lesson to support individual development and build confidence and ownership, suggesting new rhythmic patterns, melodies or simple pulse actions for the class to follow. Movement in all its forms is encouraged right up to Year 6 as an important means of experiencing and understanding key musical concepts and encouraging musical and creative expression.

Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning and each other's performances in a positive way to ensure that children's developing musical identities are nurtured with great care. At appropriate times children write reviews of their learning, such as after our Folk Dance Workshops, which gives insight into their musical learning and experience.

More generally, children listen with a critical ear to music from a range of different genres which is often linked to termly class topics such as the Egyptians, Romans, Tudors or the Victorians or geographically, linking their class learning about water and rivers to compositions about the sea by Britten or Ma Vlast by Smetana. This provides opportunities for children to draw on their existing topic knowledge and understanding and widen this knowledge within a cultural musical context. They are asked to write about what they hear in words or pictures, using their increasing musical vocabulary as they progress through the school. Similarly, provision is made where possible for children have the opportunity to express themselves musically through art, drawing or painting to music at all ages.

To extend the children's musical learning outside of the opportunities in their class music lessons, we offer children **a range of extra-curricular opportunities** to sing in our **choirs** (Junior Singing Squad (KS1) and Senior Singing Squad (KS2) both after school) and play in musical ensembles such as **Concert Band** and compose in **Music Tech Club**. Pre-pandemic we also ran separate boys' and girls' choirs at lunchtimes for those unable to come after school. We also ran a Staff Choir before school which gave staff an opportunity not only to develop their confidence but also have time for their own well-being. Due to staggered starts and lunchtimes post lockdown and the impact of social distancing our year group choirs and our Staff Choir continued online. In all these different ways, children are deepening their musical skills, knowledge, experience and understanding of music through active music-making with their peers.

MAKING MUSIC WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND LEARNING FROM PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

THE STOC VISITING MUSICIAN PROGRAMME

It is also our intention that children have the opportunity to make music with children outside of our school; and listen to, and where possible, participate in the highest quality music making by professional musicians, either in a recorded or live setting as part of class music lessons, school music trips or as part of the **STOC Visiting Musician Programme**. These exciting opportunities give our children the chance to work alongside professional musicians and to understand what it is to be a musician from real experience.





Music trips are organised to prestigious venues and events, such as our annual trip to sing in the *Scratch Youth Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall and to perform competitively in the *Godalming Festival* where we have been the only state primary school competing; or in concerts with our visiting professional musicians or major local events such as the *community opera at Brooklands Museum* organised by Surrey Arts. We were one of the 12 finalists in Chris Evan's Breakfast Show *Schools of Christmas* competition. Our entry was led by a Year 5 pupil who changed the lyrics to Silent Night. 52 children in the Senior Singing Squad and Boys' and Girls' Choirs sang and recorded the new lyrics and we made it through to the final.

Our Senior Singing Squad has participated in the ***Scratch Youth Messiah*** at the Royal Albert Hall each year and will continue to attend once this resumes post-pandemic. This provides children with the opportunity to sing Handel's Messiah with 1500 children from across the country, accompanied by a professional orchestra and young professional singers, conducted by Ben Parry, Artistic Director of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. The children learn to read a SATB score and learn more choruses each year as they progress.

Our Junior and Singing Squads and Concert Band have performed annually at the ***Godalming Performing Arts Festival*** in the Chapel at Charterhouse School. We have been the only state primary school in the competition and held our own in tightly fought competitions with private school choirs since we started competing four years ago. Sadly, the School Choirs competition is not running due to a lack of volunteers.

In the Spring term of 2022, the Senior Singing Squad, made up of children from Key Stage 2, participated in the ***Guildford Schools Festival at G Live***, singing as a massed choir a cantata about the environment and/or playing in the massed orchestra under the baton of the Surrey Youth Choir Conductor, Cole Bendall.

In the summer term of 2022, we were fortunate to have a two-day visit from ***Mat Wright MBE, Artistic Director and Founder of Barnsley Youth Choir***, a choir who are ranked number 1 in the UK and 5th in the world. Mat spent two days leading singing workshops for all our children and then gave a talk to staff, teachers, senior leaders and governors and other local choral experts about the *importance of singing for inclusive educational provision*.

In the autumn term 2022, the Senior Singing Squad was invited to participate alongside 6 other primary and secondary schools in ***Perfect Pitch***, a cantata about football written for children and timed to coincide with the 2022 Football World Cup. The children performed in football kits in the Chapel at Charterhouse School. Able string players were also invited to join the Yehudi Menuhin School Orchestra for the performances.

Forthcoming events in 2023 include:

- **February - a two-day folk music and dance workshop with professional folk musicians and dance expert for Years 3-5.** This builds on a previous highly successful joint PE and Music workshop in September 2022, supported by the Sports Premium (see overleaf), with positive impacts for our own music and dance provision as well as teacher training in PE within the SCITT, led by our PE lead. The Concert Band will act as the Ceilidh Band for the two days, having learnt and performed all the tunes from the previous workshop.





- **May - A workshop with a living choral composer.** John Mann, a composer of children's music and Head of Instrumental Music at Magdalen College School, Oxford, performing his cantata *Musical People*. He wrote the cantata for Oxfordshire schools and we are testing the remote resources. John will visit the school in the summer term to work with the Senior Singing Squad and talk about his work as a composer.
- **July- Workshops and Concert by the Aurin Girls' Choir from Keszthely, Hungary.** In support of our singing and use of the Kodaly approach to musical learning, we very much hope to host the Aurin Girls' Choir and their conductor, Laszlo Duranyik from the Kodaly School in Keszthely in Hungary. They are an outstanding youth choir from the world's leading choir school. They will perform and lead workshops for all our children over two days in the summer term as part of their UK tour.

Past examples of collaboration with professional musicians include the following visits and projects. Each of these examples started with an initial workshop introducing children to key skills, knowledge and musical listening opportunities. They then developed organically, through discussion with the Visiting Musicians and the Music Lead and observation of the children's responses, into further workshops and performance opportunities to encourage greater mastery and provide children with opportunities to go deeper in their exploration of the musical genre.

HYMN WRITING WORKSHOP WITH ANDY SEVERYN

We invited Catholic hymn writer Andy Severyn, to our school to introduce the children to his hymns which we often use in our Masses and Advent Service. We were keen for children to learn about and meet a living composer, who, in this context was writing music about his faith. We wanted to give children the opportunity to express their faith through simple songs based around the chords they had learnt in their ukulele lessons. Andy talked to the children about how he writes his songs giving insights to the creative process, showing his draft writing and composing and recording process.

The children's compositions based on an extract from scripture were taught by them to the rest of the school and sung at our collective worship over the rest of the term. Some children volunteered to become part of our Worship Music Team.

BODY PERCUSSION AND RHYTHM FOR LITERACY

Olly Turner led a highly engaging workshop on Body Percussion for Key Stage 2 children, with many opportunities for improvisation and composition in small groups and individually.

This led onto a Rhythm and Literacy workshop with Olly, where children in Key Stage 2 classes took a sentence from a text they were studying in class and explored the rhythm of the words through body percussion. This led to small group performances created by the children in response to the text.

THE MUSIC OF LATIN AMERICA

Many of our families come from Latin America so it is fitting that we explore the music from this part of the world. We did this through a series of in-school workshops and performances which built on the children's understanding and experience.

- A Samba Day for Key Stage 2 children with Olly Turner of *Beat Goes On* exploring samba music and instruments.





- Visit by the *Santiago Quartet* and two Tango dancers – live dance and music performances for whole school. The Santiago Quartet gave year group performances of music by Argentinian composer, Piazzolla, demonstrating extended and percussive bowing techniques used in this rhythmic music. This built on the children's experience and understanding gained during the Year 4 Strings Programme.
- *It Takes Two to Tango* – Singing workshops in school led by the conductor of professional choir *Icosa*, exploring folk tunes from Latin America in preparation for a joint concert with the *Santiago Quartet and Icosa*, with Year 3 children at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford. Families who attended the concert commented on how moving the concert was for them as their children sang songs from their childhood and homeland.
- Masterclass performance given on the Bandoneon to Year 3 children by Bandoneon virtuoso, *Julian Rowlands*, during the *It Takes Two to Tango* concert rehearsal.

ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC, SPOONS AND DANCE

As part of our focus on British values and reflecting our desire for children to learn about their English heritage through folk music, every child in our school has learnt to play the spoons. In the process we have explored folk music from the rest of the British Isles made links to folk music across the world. Our spoon workshops led naturally into folk dance workshops as part of a joint Music and PE project, part funded by the Sports Premium. It also links to our string programme in Year 4 through an appreciation of the difference between classical string playing and fiddle playing.

The folk music project started with:

- Year group workshops for the whole school to **learn to play the spoons and explore British folk music** with percussionist, Jo May (spoons and percussion) and fiddle player, Linda Game (fiddle). All our children participated as did all the staff. It proved to be one of the most inclusive and joyful workshops we have ever done. It's impact is still being felt over 18 months later and gave children and staff direct individual and shared experiences of making music together in a way we have not done before.

During lockdown:

- **Spoon playing continued through the lockdown** as part of our online music provision and then on our return to school.
- As it was so popular amongst the children, who reported playing at home and teaching their parents during lockdown, and clearly gave everyone so much joy, we purchased enough spoons for every child to have their own set for use in class music lessons as part of our recovery curriculum post-lockdown.

Developing advanced skills and learning about musical structure in folk music:

- With the aid of online videos created by Jo, our children learnt increasingly complex rhythm patterns on the spoons, focussing initially on the pulse and cross body movements but moving on to include triplets and compound time, which even our youngest children were keen to master.
- Children of *all* ages were able to tackle these extended techniques and improvise their own rhythm patterns using these skills.
- Led by the children's enjoyment of playing the spoons, we planned a follow up workshop with Jo and Linda to firstly, develop the extended spoon playing techniques developed in class music lessons; and secondly, explore a simple AB musical structure in folk music with Jo May and Linda Game. This led to class performances which featured in our virtual year group





Summer Concerts: <https://www.st-thomas.surrey.sch.uk/learning/music-matters-at-st-thomas/>

The joint Music and PE folk *dance* project with support from the Sports Premium:

- We noticed in our observation of the children in the second set of workshops that the children, particularly the boys, couldn't help but move to the music. So after discussions with our PE Lead, we organised a two day Folk Dance workshop for children in Key Stage 2 with Kerry Fletcher, Folk Educators Coordinator for the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), with Jo May and Linda Game accompanying on fiddle, spoons and cajon.
- This was a joint PE/Music Project, part-funded by money from the Sports Premium to encourage children to become active through dance and support our dance curriculum, led by our PE Lead, knowledge he could also use in his training of student teachers in PE.
- Children learnt English folk dances leading to Year group performances in front of their peers. They were accompanied by the new **STOC Ceilidh Band** with Key Stage 2 children of all ages and abilities performing on a variety of instruments.
- The STOC Ceilidh Band was formed on the day and provided extension opportunities for our instrumentalists who had performed solos in our Summer Concerts to learn to play simple folk tunes with Jo and Linda and accompany the dancers in the other year group. The Band have continued to play the folk tunes, performing them at the Autumn Concert 2022.
- Children wrote reviews of the folk dance workshop, linking their musical learning to literacy. Their reviews give great insight into their considerable enjoyment of the day, the challenges they faced and how they overcame them individually or with their group, to achieve the year group performance at the end of the day. They particularly liked the step dances and the opportunity to devise their own dance moves, generating creative ownership We will use these same dances in our forthcoming workshop and give children more time for improvisation and ownership of the dance. Linking to Book Week children will research the difference between reels and jigs, using the computer to research their ideas.

All these different workshops have grown organically in response to the children's reactions to the music. They have helped the children to develop strong and memorable relationships with the visiting musicians. In these very different ways, children learn and understand at first-hand what it means to be a professional musician and we hope they become inspired in their own music-making by seeing expert musicians at work in their particular genre. This is an ongoing powerful programme of real life learning with new events in the planning as outlined earlier.

EXTENSION OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR MOST ABLE MUSICIANS

In addition to the STOC Visiting Musician Programme and our extra-curricular ensembles and performances in school and outside with other children, all our children are regularly signposted to local, county and national level organisations and opportunities to enable them to extend and develop their music making further.

For example, the Music Lead has run free support sessions for keen singers in Years 5 and 6 to encourage to audition for the **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain Girls' and Boys' Choirs**. These sessions cover the aural and musicianship tests children are likely to encounter in the audition and help them to prepare an unaccompanied song. In 2022, our first pupil gained a place in the prestigious Boys' Choir. He had been singing in school since Year 1 and was a key member of our Junior and Senior Singing Squads.





In the summer term of 2022, a group of able Key Stage 2 string players were also invited to perform alongside world famous violinist, **Nicola Benedetti** as part of her Foundation's programme of string workshops for schools, held at Cranmore School.

SUPPORTING LEARNING AND OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN THROUGH MUSIC

In a range of different ways, Music has a vital role to play in supporting our School Improvement Priorities, not least in our *Making S=P+A+C+E for ME*, Learning and Communication programmes and our collaborative learning and working focus for 2022-23.

We are perhaps rare in offering a *tailored music intervention programme* to support individual learning needs in Early Years and Key Stage 1, focussing on a range of individual needs. In the past this has focussed on speech and language development and literacy skills through pulse and rhythm but could be tailored to any individual need. In 2021-22 the Music Lead led a Year 1 musical nurture group to support social development through singing games in collaboration with the SENCo and Inclusion Team. This is based on the Music Lead's doctoral research interest and experience in this area.

More generally, music can help to develop children's individual identity and sense of belonging in our school community through our daily school musical routines, music lessons and liturgical life. Children are given opportunities for musical leadership and responsibility for their learning in class music lessons and as leaders in our music ensembles and clubs. Year 6 children apply to be Music Leaders for the school and take on a variety of leadership roles during the year.

A positive mind set is essential for all musicians as they tackle musical learning challenges and make progress. Music provides that safe space where *mistakes are cool*, an attitude that encourages children to take a risk and have a go without fear of failure. This is a vital part of the creative process and steps to success.

Perhaps most importantly, music in all its forms, provides a highly valuable space where children can express themselves through song, movement, creative composition and performance, often revealing parts of their personality and ability not always seen in the classroom. In a myriad of different ways and settings, music can support and help children in their personal development, in particular their musical and creative potential and identity, and crucially post lockdown, their emotional and social development and mental health and wellbeing. This was particularly evident in the children's reviews of their learning in the Folk Dance workshop, with them reporting how much fun they had had, how they enjoyed being able to use their imagination in choreographing their own dance moves with their partner and express themselves through the dance and music.

ACTION RESEARCH – FIRST THING MUSIC

As mentioned earlier, we are participating in an ongoing practice-based research project called *First Thing Music* which is investigating the impact of a Kodaly- based musical approach on children's learning in the prime areas of learning in Early Years and Key Stage 1 and its impact as a teacher-training approach for classroom teachers and support staff.





The research project is led by Lindsay Ibbotson, Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Durham. It is designed to help classroom teachers introduce 15 minutes of singing a day into their classrooms at the start of the day with impacts seen on behaviour, social development and later on in gains in reading age, especially where singing happened every day. We are specifically investigating teacher's attitudes and experiences towards the use of this training programme in their classrooms, as well as tracking the children's musical and academic progress in the key areas of learning. We are also canvassing the children's thoughts and experiences through simple feedback mechanisms throughout the year.

The Music Lead leads a 30-minute session on a Monday for all classes in EYFS and Key Stage 1 in the children's classrooms with their teachers and support staff, where singing games are introduced gradually to the children and teaching and support staff. Everyone joins in, with the aim that these games are then used at the start of every day for 10-15 minute during the rest of the week.

Year 1 teachers are also participating in an additional 30-minute online training session every Thursday afternoon with Lindsay Ibbotson and the Music Lead. The session prepares the teachers for the songs in the following week and gives them specific tasks to achieve during the week. The training also gives the teachers the chance to learn more about the Kodaly pedagogy which underpins the programme. Teachers video their classes and this is reviewed positively together with Lindsay and the Music Lead as a Community of Practice from which we all learn together.

The different experiences of our teachers and support staff will provide an insight into the challenges and opportunities the First Thing Music training programme offers teachers and children, adding to the initial research findings of the original project.

We have seen the impact of these sessions coming through in the children's musical learning with children drawing on a deeper song bank and experience which is benefiting their learning in their normal class music lessons. It is our hope our participation in this project will bring benefits not just in additional music-making opportunities for our children, in line with best practice of a 'little and often' approach, but we will see positive impacts on their wider learning and personal development. We also hope it will give our teaching and support staff additional skills, resources and confidence in leading singing and singing games in their classroom and encourage collaborative working, a key part of our school improvement plan this year.

Dr Mather, our Music lead is also now acting as a FTM trainer for teachers at our neighbouring school, Boxgrove Primary.

