Curriculum overview for parents and carers

Music

Summary of key Music learning for Reception to Year 6.

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Unit 1	**Exploring sound** Exploring how we can use our voice, bodies and instruments to make sounds, and identifying sounds in the environment.	
Unit 2	**Celebration music** Learning about the music from a range of cultural and religious celebrations, including Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.	
Unit 3	**Music and movement** Creating simple actions to well-known songs, learning how to move to a beat and expressing feelings and emotions through movement to music.	
Unit 4	**Musical stories** Moving to music with instruction, changing movements to match the tempo, pitch or dynamics and learning that music and instruments can convey moods or represent characters.	
Unit 5	**Transport** Identifying and copying sounds produced by different vehicles using voices, bodies and instruments, demonstrating tempo changes and understanding how symbols can represent sound.	
Unit 6	**Big band** Learning about what makes a musical instrument, the four different groups of musical instruments, following a beat using an untuned instrument and performing a practised song.	

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	Year 1		
Autumn 1	**Keeping the pulse (My favourite things)** Exploring the concept of keeping a steady pulse together, children engage in music and movement activities inspired by their favourite things. They participate in different activities, moving to the beat of the music while thinking about and expressing their favourite objects or experiences.	Autumn 2	**Tempo (Snail and mouse)** Using voices, bodies and instruments to listen and respond to different pieces of music, children learn and perform a rhyme and song with a focus on tempo. They focus on the adventures of the Snail and mouse to understand how tempo can shape a musical story,
Spring 1	**Dynamics (Seaside)** Exploring the connections between music, sounds, and environments, children aim to represent the seaside. They use percussion instruments, vocal sounds, and body percussion to create sounds like crashing waves, calling seagulls, and rustling sand. They use voices and instruments to practice varying dynamics—showing a contrast between loud and soft sounds.	Spring 2	**Sound patterns (Fairytales)** Examining different favourite fairy tales, children discuss the key moments in these stories. They are guided to clap and read simple sound patterns, matching the different characters of the story. Pupils then use these sound patterns to retell the fairy tale, bringing the story to life through sound and movement.
Summer 1	**Pitch (Superheroes)** Identifying high and low notes, children use this knowledge to compose a simple tune that represents a superhero. They then listen to different pitches, recognising the difference between high and low sounds. After identifying these notes, pupils experiment with combining different pitches to create a melody that represents their chosen superhero.	Summer 2	**Musical symbols (Under the sea)** Diving into the unknown, children explore the depths of the sea through music, movement, musical symbols, and the playing of tuned percussion instruments. They engage in activities that allow them to express the mysterious underwater world, such as using their bodies to mimic the movement of sea creatures. They learn to interpret musical symbols to translate visual cues into sounds and play tuned percussion instruments, to represent the wonders of the underwater world.

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	Year 2		
Autumn 1	**Call and response (Animals)** Chanting different call and response sound patterns, children progress to creating their own call and response patterns using untuned percussion instruments. They practise rhythm and pulse as they echo and respond to each other's chants, building a strong sense of musical communication.	Autumn 2	**Instruments (Musical storytelling)** Exploring longer pieces of music, children look at how music can tell a story through the use of different instruments. They think creatively, considering how sounds can represent characters, actions, and emotions when creating a soundscape to tell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.
Spring 1	**Contrasting dynamics (Space)** Developing knowledge and understanding of contrasting dynamics, children listen to different pieces of music that represent planets and use these musical examples to inspire their own compositions. They explore how varying loud and soft sounds can capture the unique characteristics of two different planets.	Spring 2	**Singing (On this island)** Learning songs and creating sounds to represent three contrasting landscapes—seaside, countryside, and city—children explore how music can evoke different environments. They sing folk songs to reflect the different environments and use instruments and body percussion to create soundscapes representing one of the environments.
Summer 1	**Structure (Myths and legends)** Exploring structure through listening, analysing, and performing, children engage with a song about a well-known myth to understand its composition. They listen to identify sections, analyse simple sound patterns, and see how these elements tell the story of the myth. Pupils then perform short sound patterns in a simple structure using instruments and voices.	Summer 2	**Pitch (Musical Me)** Learning to sing and play the song 'Once a Man Fell in a Well,' children learn to connect the melody to specific pitches. They explore how different notes correspond to different parts of the song, using their instruments to recreate the tune accurately. Additionally, they begin to recognise how simple symbols can represent pitch, developing their ability to read and interpret musical notation.

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	Year 3		
Autumn 1	**Ballads** Learning what ballads are, how to identify their features and how to convey different emotions when performing. Selecting vocabulary to describe a story, before turning it into lyrics following the structure of a traditional ballad.	Autumn 2	**Creating compositions in response to an animation (Theme: Mountains)** Listening to music and considering the narrative it represents by paying close attention to the dynamics, pitch and tempo and how they change throughout the piece. Creating original compositions to match an animation.
Spring 1	**Developing singing technique (Theme: The Vikings)** Developing singing technique; learning to keep in time, musical notation and rhythm, culminating in a group performance of a song with actions.	Spring 2	**Pentatonic melodies and composition (Theme: Chinese New Year)** Using the story of Chinese New Year as a stimulus: revising key musical terminology, playing and creating pentatonic melodies, composing a piece of music in a group using layered melodies and performing a finished piece.
Summer 1	**Jazz** Learning about ragtime style music, traditional jazz music and scat singing. Children create a jazz motif using a swung rhythm and play a jazz version of a nursery rhyme using tuned percussion.	Summer 2	**Traditional instruments and improvisation (Theme: India)** Introducing to traditional Indian music. Learning about the rag and tal, listening to a range of examples of Indian music, identifying traditional instruments and creating improvisations and performing.

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	Year 4		
Autumn 1	**Body and tuned percussion (Theme: Rainforests)** Exploring the rainforest through music whilst being introduced to new musical terms. Using a mixture of body percussion and tuned percussion instruments to create rhythms of the rainforest, layer by layer.	Autumn 2	**Rock and Roll** Learning about the origin and features of rock and roll music, playing the Hand Jive and Rock Around the Clock, looking specifically at a walking bass line, and performing a while-class piece.
Spring 1	**Changes in pitch, tempo and dynamics (Theme: Rivers)** Representing the different stages of a river through vocal and percussive ostinatos, culminating in a final group performance.	Spring 2	**Haiku, music and performance (Theme: Hanami)** Using descriptive vocabulary to create a Haiku, putting it to music and adding percussion sound effects to bring all elements together before a final, group performance.
Summer 1	**Samba and carnival sounds and instruments** Introducing samba and the sights and sounds of the carnival. Learning about the traditional sounds and instruments, syncopated rhythms and composing their samba breaks.	Summer 2	**Adapting and transposing motifs (Theme: Romans)** Drawing upon their understanding of repeating patterns in music, pupils are introduced to the concept of motifs and adapt and transpose motifs and perform them to their peers.

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	Year 5		
Autumn 1	**Composition notation (Theme: Ancient Egypt)** Identifying the pitch and rhythm of written notes and experimenting with notating their compositions in different ways to further develop understanding of staff notation.	Autumn 2	**Blues** Identifying the key features and mood of Blues music and its importance and purpose. Learning the 12-bar Blues and the Blues scale, and combining these to create an improvised piece with a familiar, repetitive backing.
Spring 1	**South and West Africa** Learning 'Shosholoza', a traditional South African song, playing the accompanying chords using tuned percussion and learning to play the djembe and some dance moves.	Spring 2	**Composition to represent the festival of colour (Theme: Holi festival)** Exploring the associations between music, sounds and colour, composing and, as a class and performing their own musical composition.
Summer 1	**Looping and remixing** Learning how dance music is created, focusing particularly on the use of loops, and learning how to play a well known song before putting a dance music spin on it to create their own versions.	Summer 2	**Musical theatre** An introduction to musical theatre, learning how singing, acting and dancing can be combined to give an overall performance, exploring how music can be used to tell a story and learning about performance aspects.

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	Year 6		
Autumn 1	**Dynamics, pitch and tempo (Theme: Fingal's Cave)** Appraising the work of Mendelssohn and further developing the skills of improvisation and composition.	Autumn 2	**Songs of WW2** Developing greater accuracy in pitch and control. Identifying pitches within an octave when singing and using knowledge of pitch to develop confidence when singing in parts.
Spring 1	**Film music** Exploring and identifying the characteristics of film music. Creating a composition and graphic score to perform alongside a film.	Spring 2	**Theme and Variations (Theme: Pop Art)** Exploring the musical concept of theme and variations and discovering how rhythms can 'translate' onto different instruments
Summer 1	**Baroque** Exploring music of the Baroque Period (from 1600-1750). Looking at the great Baroque composers and musicians and at the structural and stylistic features of the music that they wrote and performed.	Summer 2	**Composing and performing a Leavers' Song** Creating their own leavers' song personal to their experiences as a class; listening to and critiquing well known songs, writing the lyrics, exploring the concept of the four chord backing track and composing melodies.

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