**St Mary’s Catholic Primary School Music Development Plan**

**School: St Mary’s Catholic Primary, Axminster  
Trust/local authority: CAST  
Local music hub: Devon and Torbay  
Music lead: Charlotte Gibbs  
Governor with responsibility for Music: Claire Rogie  
Executive Headteacher: Rob Meech**

**Head of School: Claire Webber**  
Date updated: 16/07/25  
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“speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,” Ephesians 5;19

“he who begins life with music will have this reflecting on his future like golden sunshine. The gift received with this will provide such strength, that it will help to overcome many difficulties.” Zoltan Kodaly

**Statement of our Catholic Christian Ethos**

This development plan reflects our Catholic Christian values which recognise, celebrate and welcome diversity. We believe that each and every one of us brings something valuable to our school family. We aim to develop pupils’ personal qualities and achievements. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest standards regardless of their age, religion, gender, ethnicity, attainment or background.

**Philosophy**

“Music is an essential part of children’s education. It stimulates the brain and helps enormously in a child’s whole-person development-physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually.” David Vinden and Cyrilla Rowsell.

“Music is one of the most powerful forces for the uplifting of mankind. And he who renders it accessible to as many people as possible is a benefactor of humanity.” Zoltan Kodaly

**Aims**

* To develop aesthetic sensitivity and creative ability in all pupils.
* Foster pupil’s sensitivity to and their understanding and enjoyment of music through an active involvement in listening, composing and performing.
* Provide for the expression and development of individual skills and for sharing experience and cooperating with others; singing, playing, composing and listening can give individual and collective satisfaction.
* Develop an awareness of musical traditions and developments in a variety of cultures and societies.
* The capacity to express ideas, thoughts and feelings through music.
* Provide the opportunity to experience a feeling of fulfilment which derives from striving for the highest possible artistic and technical standard.

**Objectives**

* To sing in tune with expression in unison and in harmony.
* To develop a sense of pulse and metre, and be able to demonstrate this.
* To recognise, understand, perform and read and write rhythms.
* To develop an understanding of pitch using hand signs, and tonic solfa.
* To sight sing simple melodies from stick notation and from the stave.
* To recognise and respond to the interrelated dimensions of music.
* To understand form and structure and demonstrate their understanding through movement and composition.
* To move with control and coordination, matching movements to music.
* To identify and name instruments of the orchestra as well as pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments.
* To have an introduction to the history of western classical music, the main composers and their composing styles as well as world music.

**Key Components**

**Teaching and Learning Approach - Methodology**

***'Everyone who learns an instrument should sing first. Singing, independent of an instrument, is the real and profound schooling of musical abilities.'*** Zoltán Kodály  
  
At St Mary’s, our teaching methods are developed from the techniques developed by Zoltán Kodály and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, which are main components of the recent Model Music Curriculum. In simplified terms, Kodály teaches musical skills through using the voice as the first instrument, whilst Dalcroze furthers this development with movement to music.  
  
Kodály's approach to music education is based on teaching, learning and understanding music through the use of song, thereby eliminating the technical problems that can be encountered with the use of an instrument.

Musical development using the voice can develop as early as babyhood. Singing is an engaging, sociable activity that can feed the spirit as well as the musical mind.  It’s the most straightforward way to learn and internalise music and to develop musicianship skills. Through unaccompanied singing, a child can begin to acquire skills essential to all musicians: musical memory, inner hearing, true intonation and harmonic awareness.  
  
In Dalcroze Eurhythmics, musical concepts are taught and experienced through movement of all parts of the body. For example, we may step or clap the pulse or rhythm whilst singing, or may move to show phrasing. Through training the body, and not only the ear, we can improve our ability to be expressive and further our understanding so that we experience the music more deeply.

The overall structure of the music lessons incorporates the combined principles of the Kodály and Dalcroze approaches to teaching music. Through singing songs and moving to music, children learn about the structure and organisation of music. The children are taught to listen to and appreciate different forms of music and are also taught simple notation and how to compose. Lessons aim to give the children the opportunity to be creative within listening, performing and composition activities including improvisation. The use of percussion instruments is frequently incorporated into the music class where appropriate. During curriculum lessons, children are given the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups as well as individually. Children are encouraged to evaluate their own and their peers performances positively as well as areas that can be improved. Children in KS2 are given the opportunity to take part in whole class instrumental lessons learning to play instruments such as the flute, brass instruments, ukulele and samba/djembe drums.

**Curriculum Organisation**

**Robin Class**

In Robin Class (reception) music is taught by the specialist music teacher for half an hour followed by a further forty five minutes of support within continuous provision each week. The class teacher reinforces their learning during daily songs and rhymes sessions.

**Woodpecker Class, Owl Class, Kestrel Class and Eagle Class**

Music is taught for one hour each week by a specialist music teacher. The children also attend Prayer and Praise, which is a further 30 minutes a week.

**Singing Strategy**

**Vision Statement:** Singing is integral to our school community, fostering musical skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Our strategy aims to create an inclusive, joyful, and educational singing experience for all students, aligned with the National Curriculum for Music, which emphasizes the development of musical understanding, skills, and enjoyment.

**Strategic Goals:**

1. **Accessibility and Inclusion**: Ensure all students participate in singing activities, regardless of their background or ability, making singing a shared and valued experience.
2. **Skill Development**: Develop students' vocal technique, musical understanding, and confidence through progressive and structured singing activities.
3. **Cultural and Spiritual Enrichment**: Use singing as a tool for cultural expression, spiritual reflection, and community building.

**1. Weekly Singing in Prayer and Praise**

**Objective**: To embed singing in weekly collective worship, enhancing students' spiritual development and community sense.

* **Repertoire**: A diverse selection of hymns, modern worship songs, and reflective pieces that align with the school's values and themes for the week.
* **Engagement**: Use call-and-response, echo singing, and sign-supported singing to involve all students actively.
* **Skill Focus**: Emphasize diction, pitch accuracy, and expression. Introduce harmony singing to challenge and engage older pupils.

**2. Kodály Singing Games**

**Objective**: To use Kodály-based activities to support musical learning within the curriculum, promoting aural skills, pitch accuracy, and rhythmic understanding.

* **KS1 Focus**: Emphasize basic pitch-matching, beat-keeping, and developing tuneful singing. Use simple songs, games, and chants that incorporate solfege (so and mi) and rhythm syllables (ta and ti-ti).
* **KS2 Focus**: Progress to more complex games that involve part-singing, canon, and more advanced solfege work. Integrate rhythmic reading and notation activities that correspond with singing games.
* **Assessment**: Regular formative assessment through observation and peer feedback to monitor progress and provide targeted support.

**3. Open Access Choir**

**Objective**: To offer an extracurricular singing opportunity for pupils who wish to further their singing skills, build confidence, and perform.

* **Recruitment**: Promote the choir during assemblies and music lessons, emphasizing that it is open to all who enjoy singing.
* **Repertoire**: A varied selection of songs, including popular music, folk songs, multicultural pieces, and songs with two-part harmonies to challenge and engage.
* **Performances**: Opportunities to perform at school and local community events to build performance skills and confidence.

**SEND**

Musical activities are particularly effective in the education of children with learning difficulties of any kind, ranging from physical to social and/or emotional problems. Those with the highest level of need are offered bespoke musical play sessions to support their development with one-to-one or small group sessions with our specialist music teacher, using our MEG funding from Devon Music Education Hub. Creative approaches provide opportunities for all learners to solve problems, to work independently, to work in a group and to be responsible for self-regulation. At St Mary’s we believe that all children should have equal access to music. SEND children take part in music lessons in whatever way they are most comfortable. Each unique child is welcomed and celebrated.

**KS2 Whole Class Instrumental Tuition**

In both Kestrel and Eagle Class, the children receive at least one term of instrumental tuition. Kestrel Class (year 4 and some year 5) learn the flute, either on a jFlute or Toot and have a term of brass tuition at Axe Valley Academy. Eagle Class (year 5 and year 6) receive a term of ukulele, which builds on chords learnt in previous years. Children can progress from this experience onto lessons with our team of Visiting Music Teachers.

**Live Performances**

Every child has the opportunity to attend a concert with live musicians. Depending on ticket availability and opportunities that arise within the year, children attend either a concert in Exeter Great Hall with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, attend The Mix festival, run by Devon Music Education Hub, or attend a concert as part of the Seaton Music series along with performances from visiting musicians and Axe Valley students.

**Extra Curricular Music**

**Instrumental Tuition**

Children are encouraged to learn an instrument with visiting music teachers. The instrumental lessons on offer include: violin, viola, cello, piano, flute, recorder, drums, brass, ukulele and guitar. Where appropriate the school may be able to fund music lessons for children who are in receipt of pupil premium. The school also has links with the Clemence Griffin Trust who help fund tuition fees for children from lower income families who live in Devon. Each term a number of children are entered for ABRSM/Trinity examinations. Instrumental lessons take place during the school day in our dedicated music room. Parents are informed about the range of music lessons available via our Music Information Leaflet, which is emailed to parents annually along with being available on our website.

**Open Access Choir**

Children are encouraged to join the choir. It is open to all children regardless of ability. The choir meet before or after school on a weekly basis and takes part in local festivals and events. They also sing within the local community at a local Care Home, at The Minster and other local venues.

**Orchestra for All**

Our specialist music teacher launched a new inclusive music ensemble in Autumn Term 2023. This will continue to be open to all regardless of ability. Those not receiving instrumental lessons will be able to join in playing the ukulele, recorder, or other tuned and untuned percussion instruments. From September 2025, this ensemble will rehearse in the mornings, meaning more children will be able to access it.

**String Orchestra**

Our reception teacher runs a String Orchestra during the Summer Term, which is open to all strings players.

**Engagement with local secondary schools**

Children are St Mary’s are encouraged to attend the community orchestra held at the secondary school in Axminster, which many of our children go on to attend. We also support children to attend other music events at Axe Valley Academy within the school day as appropriate, such as their Orchestra Days. In addition, classes walk over to Axe Valley Academy for selected whole class instrumental tuition opportunities. From September 2025, AVA are also offering an After-School Music Centre, details of which are included on our Instrumental Lessons Opportunities leaflet, which is directly emailed to parents and also available on the website.

**Performance Opportunities**

During the autumn term, the choir, Orchestra for ALl and other instrumentalists perform in concerts in the local area. For example, the choir often sing in local nursing homes. KS1 perform a nativity and KS2 sing in a carol service towards the end of term.

During the summer term, we perform in the Minster Church Lunchtime Concert series with the choir, Orchestra for All, String Orchestra and Year 6 instrumentalists, regardless of standard. In addition, children in year 5 and 6 take part in a summer production.

At the end of every term, children are able to perform solos or in small ensemble groups in an informal concert to which parents are invited. Children are also encouraged to share their progress during class assemblies, either by performing on their instrument, or sharing a song or music game they are currently learning. We are also encouraging instrumentalists to perform as children arrive and leave at the weekly Celebration Assemblies.

Parents are informed via letters and emails about performances and are encouraged to attend to support their child.

**Resources**

Music lessons generally take place in the hall, which has a piano, a laptop and screen. Occasionally where the hall is needed for other activities, class music lessons will take place in the classroom or outside. There is a music room with a variety of pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments. Peripatetic music lessons take place in the music room, or wherever there is space should this already be in use. CD’s and speakers are in the hall to be used during music if needed. We also have access to Charanga, Classroom 200, Chrome Music Lab and YuStudio (on Charanga), and use the latter two to develop music technology skills.

**Health and safety.**

Teachers have due regard for these issues and encourage the children to work carefully and have a knowledge of the equipment that will prevent dangerous mishandling of instruments. Instruments are regularly checked to ensure that they are in a safe condition. All visiting music staff are obliged to read the school’s policy on safeguarding.

**Assessment and recording**

We assess children's knowledge and understanding by questioning, listening and observation of performance in class as an ongoing process. Children often perform in groups to each other and this gives an opportunity for the teacher to assess children’s achievements and plan in to lessons areas for improvement.

At the end of the year, the teacher makes a summative judgement about each individual child according to whether they are working at expected levels, exceeding or working towards for their year group. This information will be communicated to parents in the written report once yearly.

**Monitoring of Class Music Teaching**

Visiting music teachers are encouraged to communicate with the subject coordinator about progress and any issues that need resolving.

The music lead liaises closely with the senior leadership team, and through lesson observations and professional dialogue, support is provided as needed to ensure there is a high standard of music teaching so children achieve their full potential.

**Evaluation process for the success of the Music Development Plan**

The music lead will meet at least once a term with a senior leader to discuss whether any adaptations need to be made to the Music Development Plan.

**Transition work with local secondary schools**

In addition to encouraging our instrumentalists to attend events/orchestral rehearsals at Axe Valley Academy, our Year 6 children are given a copy of their musical journey throughout their time at St Mary’s, which lists what they have covered whilst at school. In addition, Year 6 children will be provided with a ‘Why Music?’ guide produced by Devon Music Education Hub to explain the value of continuing with music at secondary level.