

Music Development Plan for UK Infant School (Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1)

Aim:

To enhance music education in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1), moving away from reliance on the Charanga programme, building teacher confidence and subject knowledge, and introducing children to foundational music literacy and composition through the use of pictures and stories.

1. Vision and Objectives

Vision:

To create a rich, engaging, and creative music curriculum that allows children in EYFS and KS1 to explore, enjoy, and create music. The aim is to empower teachers with the knowledge and confidence to deliver high-quality music lessons that foster children's creativity, understanding of musical concepts, and an early ability to read and compose music.

Key Objectives:

- Develop teacher confidence and competence in delivering music lessons without relying solely on pre-packaged programmes.
 - Introduce children to basic musical notation through engaging, age-appropriate methods such as pictures, symbols, and stories.
 - Encourage creativity through musical composition, using pictures and storytelling as prompts in EYFS and KS1.
 - Foster an inclusive and joyful music-making environment where children can explore instruments, rhythm, melody, and musical expression.
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2. Curriculum Structure

EYFS (Ages 3-5)

Key Focus:

- Sensory and exploratory learning, introducing basic musical elements through play.
- Developing listening skills, rhythm awareness, and movement to music.
- Creative composition through pictures, stories, and soundscapes.

Activities:

- **Singing and Movement:** Regular singing sessions with a focus on rhythm and pitch. Use call-and-response songs, nursery rhymes, and action songs to build rhythm awareness.
- **Percussion Instruments:** Use simple percussion instruments (shakers, tambourines, hand drums) to explore different sounds and rhythmic patterns.

- **Storytelling with Sound:** Create soundscapes that accompany familiar stories (e.g., rain sticks for rain, drum rolls for thunder). Encourage children to think about how sounds can represent different characters or events.
- **Symbolic Notation:** Introduce children to simple graphic notation (e.g., pictures representing sounds like loud/quiet or fast/slow). Begin to show how pictures can represent changes in dynamics or tempo.
- **Creative Composition:** Encourage children to compose their own simple soundscapes by selecting different instruments and creating a sequence of sounds that tell a story.

KS1 (Ages 5-7)

Key Focus:

- Building foundational knowledge of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, dynamics, and tempo.
- Introducing basic musical notation (notes, rests, etc.) in a playful and creative way.
- Developing children's ability to create and compose simple pieces of music.

Activities:

- **Music Reading:** Introduce simple notation using pictures and symbols initially (e.g., dots for beats, lines for long notes). Transition to basic traditional notation for quarter notes (crotchets), half notes (minims), and rests.
- **Rhythm Games:** Use clapping games and body percussion to teach rhythm. Gradually introduce rhythmic notation and give children opportunities to compose simple rhythmic patterns.
- **Melody Exploration:** Use tuned percussion (e.g., xylophones, glockenspiels) to help children explore simple melodic patterns. Begin to connect their play with note names and notation.
- **Story-Based Composition:** Continue to use stories and pictures to inspire musical composition. Ask children to compose short pieces that tell a story or represent an event (e.g., a storm, a party, a journey).
- **Group Performance:** Encourage small group performances where children can practice playing their compositions or improvising within a group setting.

3. Supporting Teacher Knowledge and Confidence

Teacher Training and CPD:

- **Workshops:** Organise termly workshops for teachers focused on developing their subject knowledge in key areas of music (e.g., rhythm, melody, and composition). These workshops will include practical strategies for teaching music, including non-specialist-friendly methods of introducing notation.

- **In-House Expertise:** Provide access to an in-house music specialist or external music educator who can co-teach lessons, offer model lessons, and provide on-the-spot guidance to staff.
- **CPD on Creativity in Music:** Organise CPD sessions that focus on how to foster creativity in music lessons, including how to use stories, pictures, and play to teach musical concepts and composition.

Resources for Teachers:

- **Music Curriculum Packs:** Create lesson plans and resource packs for teachers, which include activities, musical notation cards, picture prompts, and rhythm games. These resources should offer flexibility to adapt lessons to the needs of their class.
- **Online Resource Bank:** Develop an internal digital resource bank where teachers can access videos, audio files, and lesson ideas for easy reference.
- **Peer Collaboration:** Encourage collaborative planning between teachers where they can share ideas, successes, and challenges, building confidence together.

4. Introducing Music Notation and Composition through Pictures and Stories

Rationale:

Introducing music notation at this early stage should be engaging, playful, and rooted in children's natural creativity. By using pictures and stories, children can relate abstract musical concepts to familiar, concrete ideas.

Strategy:

- **EYFS – Sound and Symbol Connection:** Use visual prompts, such as pictures of animals or nature scenes, to represent different sounds. For example, a bird might represent a high-pitched sound, while a drum could represent a low-pitched, rhythmic pattern. These pictures can later be turned into more structured "scores" where children follow a sequence of sounds.
- **KS1 – Transition to Simple Notation:** Gradually introduce basic notation (e.g., crotchets, quavers, and minims) alongside pictures. For example, use a combination of traditional notes with illustrations (e.g., a bird for a high-pitched note or a drum for a loud, short beat). Slowly reduce the pictures and increase the use of traditional notation as the children become more familiar with musical symbols.
- **Creative Storytelling and Composition:** Use familiar stories (fairy tales, everyday events) to inspire musical composition. For example, children can create a musical piece that represents a walk through the woods (using instruments to mimic footsteps, birds, wind, etc.). Encourage children to represent these sounds on paper using either pictures or simple notation.

5. Assessment and Progress Tracking

EYFS:

- Observation-based assessment, focusing on children’s participation in music activities, their ability to follow rhythms, and their engagement with sound and music-making.
- Track children’s development in their ability to represent sound with pictures and symbols, and their growing confidence in improvising and composing.

KS1:

- Use informal assessment through performances, compositions, and class participation. Teachers can track progress in recognising and using simple notation, rhythmic accuracy, and creative expression in composition.
 - Children’s ability to work in groups and perform with increasing confidence can also be part of assessment criteria.
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6. Monitoring and Review

- **Termly Curriculum Reviews:** Schedule termly reviews to assess how the new music curriculum is being implemented. Gather feedback from teachers to identify areas of success and aspects that may need further support or adjustment.
 - **Pupil Voice:** Regularly seek feedback from children about their enjoyment of music lessons and their perceived progress. This can be done through simple surveys or group discussions.
 - **Performance Opportunities:** Provide opportunities for children to showcase their musical progress through school assemblies, informal performances, or mini-concerts. This will help children feel proud of their achievements and allow teachers to observe progress in a performance context.
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7. Community and Parental Engagement

- **Music Assemblies and Performances:** Invite parents and carers to attend musical performances where children can demonstrate what they have learned, helping to build a culture of music appreciation in the school community.
 - **Family Music Workshops:** Offer family music workshops where parents and children can make music together, reinforcing the importance of music education and encouraging music-making at home.
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Conclusion:

This Music Development Plan aims to create a dynamic and engaging music curriculum that moves beyond reliance on Charanga, empowers teachers, and allows children to experience the joy of music while building foundational skills in music literacy and composition. Through regular support, hands-on training, and creative approaches to teaching music, this plan fosters a vibrant musical environment in both EYFS and KS1.