



Hillside Primary School

Music Curriculum Intent

At Hillside Primary School, our Music curriculum is designed to place the needs and aspirations of our pupils at the heart of their learning. Our bespoke curriculum is ambitious and inclusive which empowers every child to be a musician, fostering a deep love of music and performance to help them "Be the BEST they can be." Our Music curriculum intent is underpinned by four key attitudes for learning, which ensure our pupils develop the character and resilience needed to thrive in the modern world:

- **Believe**
- **Engage**
- **Succeed**
- **Try**

We deliver a high-quality Music curriculum that equips pupils with the Substantive Knowledge (musical elements and dimensions) and Disciplinary Knowledge (the skills of listening, singing, playing, improvising, composing, and performing) essential for achieving and exceeding the expected standard. Our curriculum is anchored by six 'Big Ideas' that build progressively. When pupils encounter a Big Idea, they revisit prior units to make connections, building the mental schema required to understand how music is constructed, enjoyed, and shared across different cultures and eras.

BELIEVE: Building Confidence & Belonging

- Culture, Context & Style (Big Ideas): We foster an environment where children believe in their unique musical potential by exploring how diverse genres, from Classical and Jazz to Hip-Hop and Reggae, connect communities globally.
- Vocabulary for success: We believe that vocabulary is the gateway to high achievement. Pupils move from simple language in EYFS to mastering tier-3 terminology such as 'Pulse', 'Pitch', 'Syncopation', 'Notation', and 'Texture'.
- Inclusive Achievement: Through pre-teaching rhythms, visual scaffolding, and SEND adaptations (such as using adapted instruments or icon-based notation), we ensure all pupils—regardless of background—believe they can access Age Related Expectations (ARE) and beyond during practical music-making.

ENGAGE: Curiosity & Connection

- Instrumentation & Sound (Big Idea): We spark curiosity by tracking how different instruments produce sound, exploring everything from standard classroom percussion and glockenspiels to electronic synthesizers and classical orchestral sections.

- Musical Enquiry (Disciplinary): Pupils engage as active listeners. They move from moving their bodies to a basic pulse in Key Stage 1 to critically appraising a piece of music, identifying its structure, instrumentation, and emotional impact in Key Stage 2.
- Local and Global Identity: Our curriculum draws heavily on connection. By engaging with both local musical traditions and a vast array of global styles within the Charanga framework, children see themselves within the curriculum and connect their own voices to the wider global musical story.

SUCCEED: Precision & Mastery

- Pulse & Rhythm (Big Idea): Success is rooted in a precise internal rhythm. Pupils move from simple physical clapping games to accurately reading, keeping, and playing complex rhythmic patterns against a steady counter-pulse.
- Composition & Notation (Disciplinary): Mastery is shown when pupils can move past simple experimentation to intentionally creating their own musical motifs, eventually recording them using graphic or standard formal notation.
- Substantive Mastery: Pupils succeed when they can confidently manipulate the dimensions of music, intentionally altering pitch, dynamics, and tempo to achieve a specific expressive effect in performance.

TRY: Resilience & Hard Thinking

- Improvisation & Performance (Big Ideas): Pupils embrace "hard thinking" and vulnerability to stand up and perform or improvise phrases in front of peers, building massive personal resilience.
- Critical Evaluation (Disciplinary): We cultivate a culture where children are not afraid to "try" new ideas, evaluate their own musical compositions, accept constructive feedback, and adapt their work to improve the final group performance.
- Melody & Texture (Big Ideas): Children develop resilience by studying how complex layers of sound fit together, moving from simple unison singing to complex rounds, solo parts, and instrumental harmonies.

Through this vocabulary-rich, sequential curriculum, Hillside pupils do not just "learn" music; they think and act like musicians, building the character and cultural capital needed to thrive in the modern world.

Hillside 'Big Ideas': Substantive Concepts & Vocabulary

Our Big Ideas act as the "connective tissue" across the music curriculum, helping pupils retain crucial musical concepts.

Big Idea	Essential Knowledge	Vocabulary Examples
Pulse & Rhythm	The steady heartbeat of music and how durations of sound fit over it.	Pulse, Rhythm, Tempo, Syncopation, Off-beat.
Pitch & Melody	The highness or lowness of notes combined to create memorable tunes.	Pitch, Melody, Interval, Scale, Pentatonic.
Dynamics & Tempo	How volume (loud/quiet) and speed (fast/slow) change the expression of music.	Forte, Piano, Crescendo, Accelerando, Allegro.
Texture & Structure	How layers of sound combine and how a piece of music is organised into sections.	Unison, Harmony, Texture, Verse, Chorus, Bridge.
Instrumentation & Timbre	The unique quality of different instruments and voices and how they sound.	Timbre, Percussion, Woodwind, Brass, Backing Track.
Context & Style	How music belongs to specific times, cultures, genres, and historical eras.	Style, Genre, Classical, Gospel, Groove, Composition.

Working as a Musician: Disciplinary Progress

Strand	KS1	Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3/4)	Upper Key Stage 2 (Y5/6)
Listening & Appraising	Identify the basic style of a song and find the steady pulse through movement.	Recognize standard instruments by ear and describe musical dimensions using core vocabulary.	Deeply compare two styles, analyzing historical context, structure, and emotional intent.
Singing & Vocal Expression	Sing songs clearly with control over pitch, following a melody line.	Sing with awareness of posture, breathing, and clear diction in two-part rounds.	Sing expressively in multi-part harmonies, maintaining pitch against a counter-melody.
Playing Instruments	Play simple rhythmic or pitch patterns on classroom percussion to a steady pulse.	Play differentiated glockenspiel/recorder parts, following basic notation/graphs.	Confidently play solo or ensemble instrumental parts with stylistic accuracy from formal notation.
Improvisation & Composition	Experiment with changing sounds and construct short 2-note patterns.	Improvisation using 3 specified notes; compose simple graphic-score motifs.	Improvise questions and answers stylistically; compose and record structured 4-bar melodies.

Music Curriculum: A Knowledge-Rich Sequence (Charanga-Aligned)

Year	Autumn	Spring	Summer
EYFS	Me! (Exploring sounds/pulse)	Everyone! (Singing together)	Our World (Musical storytelling)
Y1	Hey You! (Hip Hop, Pulse, Rhythm)	In The Groove (Exploring different styles)	Your Imagination (Pop, Pitch, Imagination)
Y2	Hands, Heart, Hands (South African Style)	I Wanna Play In A Band (Rock, Instrumental playing)	Reflect, Rewind & Replay (Classical, Musical history)
Y3	Let Your Spirit Fly (R&B, Harmony, Equality)	Three Little Birds (Reggae, Syncopation)	Bring The Noise / Glockenspiel 1 (Structure, Basic notation)
Y4	Mamma Mia (70s Pop, Structure, ABBA)	Stop! (Rap, Grime, Social lyrics)	Blackbird (The Beatles, Pop/Rock history)
Y5	Livin' On A Prayer (Classic Rock, Vocal ranges)	Make You Feel My Love (Pop Ballads, Expression)	Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (Old School Hip Hop, Improvisation)
Y6	Happy (Pop, Neo-Soul, Complex Rhythms)	A New Year Carol (Benjamin Britten, Classical notation)	Reflect, Rewind & Replay (Y6) (Advanced Appraising & Performance)