



## Case Study - Lead Schools for Music, Nottingham City

Can innovative approaches to oracy, literacy, behaviour for learning and cognitive flexibility take centre stage in the inclusive musical classroom?



# Background



After 18 years as a mainstream primary teacher in both Dublin and Nottingham, I retrained as a music specialist through British Kodaly Academy and many hours of research based study around what a good primary music education should look like.

In 2021, I started to build a bespoke music curriculum for the students of Forest Fields Primary School in Nottingham City – a school with 46 different languages – where I have worked since 2014.

In 2024, we were awarded Lead School for Music in Nottingham City in partnership with Nottingham Music Hub to help support and guide other city schools in the development of their music provision.

I am currently acting as community supervisor for a PhD student researching Music & Mental Health in partnership with Nottingham Trent University & University of Nottingham.

*Caroline Cawley, Music Specialist & Curriculum Lead  
Forest Fields Primary & Nursery School*

# Case Study



*Can innovative approaches to oracy, literacy, behaviour for learning and cognitive flexibility take centre stage in the inclusive musical classroom?*

Behaviour for Learning

Oracy

Literacy

Executive Function & Cognitive Flexibility



# Behaviour for Learning

Relentless routines & relentless positivity!

Board of Recognition: an opportunity to praise and recognise any small effort or adherence to the 'focus behaviour' from the moment the class enters the room - high expectations from the start.

Choose a colour for the board, texts home regarding effort or noteworthy moments, emails to SLT/ class teacher, class points and weekly certificates of achievement.

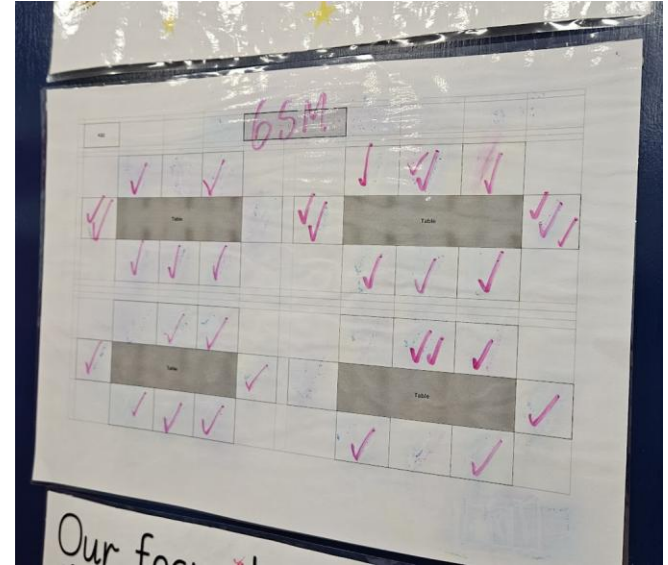


# Behaviour for Learning

'Low Threshold, High Ceiling' nature of music lessons means everyone has a chance to engage and impress - SEND, EAL, students who struggle with their mental health and students for whom classroom life can be challenging.

Respectful and accepting environment makes the Music Room a safe place where opinions are welcomed and musical risk taking is encouraged.

The Music Room is an exciting place to be!



# Oracy

Many students struggle with certain curriculum subjects, those who don't like writing for example.

But in a largely kinesthetic, oral, aural and performance based music lesson, they come alive!

***There are different criteria for success in the Music Room!***



[The British Kodály Academy](#)

What is Kodály?

The Kodály Method is a music education approach developed in Hungary by Zoltán Kodály, emphasizing singing/vocalising as the primary method for music learning. It focuses on developing aural skills, musical literacy, movement, active participation, collaboration and a deep appreciation for music, particularly through singing and folk songs.

# Music Curriculum KS2

## World Music Traditions:

West African Djembe  
*(Babatunde Olatunji)*

Indian Classical *(Kishori  
Amonkar)*

Bhangra *(Bhujhangy Group)*

Music in Arabic *(Nusrat Fateh Ali  
Khan & Reem Kelani)*

South African Vocals *(Ladysmith  
Black Mambazo)*

Gamelan *(Indonesian Gamelan)*

## Western Classical Traditions:

Baroque *(Gregorio Allegri)*

Classical *(Beethoven)*

Romantic *(Antonin Dvorak)*

Modern Eras *(Steve Reich,  
Samuel Barber, Anna  
Clyne, Hans Zimmer)*

## Popular Music:

Folk *(Bela Bartok, Simon &  
Garfunkel)*

Artpop *(Bjork, Kate Bush)*

Blues *(Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith)*

Jazz *(Dave Brubeck Quartet, Ella  
Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington)*

Rock *(The Beatles, Elvis & many  
more modern artists)*

Soul / Motown *(Stevie Wonder,  
The Supremes, Aretha Franklin)*

Find each of the artists & composers plus repertoire Y1 – Y6 here:

[Music Styles & Composers – Ms Cawley's Music Page](#)



## Year 2

### Autumn 1

Song: Hound Dog  
Composer: Elvis Presley

### Autumn 2

Song: Bolero  
Composer: Maurice Ravel

### Spring 1

Song: Out and About (poetry)  
Poet: Shirley Hughes

### Spring 2

Song: Marche Militaire  
Composer: Franz Schubert

### Summer 1

Song: Night Ferry  
Composer: Anna Clyne

### Summer 2

Song: Octopus's Garden  
Composer: The Beatles

## Year 3

### Cycle A

Genre: World Music Traditions  
Style: South African Vocals  
Composer: Ladysmith Black Mambazo

### Cycle B

Genre: Western Classical Tradition  
Style: The Baroque Era  
Composers: Gregorio Allegri  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
Johann Pachelbel

### Cycle C

Genre: World Music Traditions  
Style: West African Djembe  
Composer: Babatundé Olatunji

### Cycle D

Genre: Popular Music  
Style: Folk Music  
Composers: Bela Bartok  
Simon & Garfunkel

## Year 4

### Cycle A

Genre: Popular Music  
Style: Motown and Soul  
Composers: Stevie Wonder  
The Supremes  
Aretha Franklin

### Cycle B

Genre: World Music Traditions  
Style: Music in Arabic  
Composers: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan  
Reem Kelani

### Cycle C

Genre: Western Classical Tradition  
Style: Classical Era  
Composer: Ludwig Van Beethoven

### Cycle D

Genre: World Music Traditions  
Style: Gamelan  
Composer: Gamelan Gong Kebyar

Map: Info (p. 107)

High notes: 6-8 or 8-10 (Shen's 100)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

Lower notes: 1-5 or 5-9 (Shen's 100)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

Traverse 6 Lines!





# Oracy



Students started to remember and reuse key vocabulary referring to previous learning in presentations - 'Musical Dimensions' technical terms, names of countries, cities, significant years, eras, connections with world history, timeline links.

Everyone who speaks, regardless of ability, receives that same respect from their peers.

Analysis of and curiosity around the artist's or composers mindset and life.

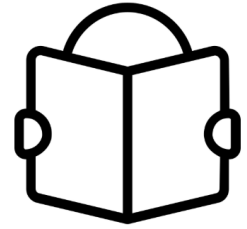
***Some of the links across style, genre and history made by students independently:***

*Were racial justice heroes Babatunde Olatunji and Nelson Mandela friends? (Year 3)*

*There are parallels between 'Largo' by Antonin Dvorak and 'Adagio for Strings' by Samuel Barber - they even named their songs after tempos! (Year 6)*

*Reem Kelani's 'Sprinting Gazelle' has very similar instrumentation to that of a jazz band - her drummer even uses brushes just like the drummer in Dave Brubeck Quartet! (Year 5)*

# Literacy



‘Read Aloud’ program- link between books and music - ‘performance’

Some musical terminology (musical dimensions) could be used to help students think like a writer whilst reading.

Using these terms in reading lessons could help with comprehension, oration/prosody and thus the student’s own writing.

# Pitch

Changing pitch is used to set the scene, for emphasis and to command attention.

Torak is afraid and trying to keep a low profile – use a low pitch.

Pitch gets higher when asking a question.

Torak woke with a jolt from a sleep he'd never meant to have.

The fire had burned low. He crouched in the fragile shell of light and peered into the looming blackness of the Forest. He couldn't see anything. Couldn't hear anything. Had it come back? Was it out there now, watching him with its hot, murderous eyes?

'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver

# Dynamics

The volume that you read at has an impact on the meaning.

We need to follow the direction of the author.

Volume changes add emphasis.

Pianissimo: very soft *pp*

Piano: soft *p*

Mezzo Piano: medium soft *mp*

Mezzo Forte: medium loud *mf*

Forte: Loud *f*

Fortissimo: very loud *ff*

‘PAY ATTENTION!’ screamed Gobber the Belch, the soldier in charge of teaching Initiation.

‘This will be your first military operation, and Hiccup will be commanding the team.’

'How to Train Your Dragon' by Cressida Cowell



# Tempo

We read faster to demonstrate suspense or to show that the character is panicked.

The author will often use short sentences to get this across.

As the sentences lengthen, we can slow down for impact.

Accelerando: getting gradually faster  
Rallentando: getting gradually slower

Then the Forest exploded. Ravens screamed. Pines cracked. And out of the dark beneath the trees surged a deeper darkness: a huge rampaging menace in bear form. Suddenly death was upon them.

'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver

# Articulation

(staccato or legato)

‘Let’s go, said Becky. ‘Now, Sam. Quick!’

Staccato (short and spiky)  
(note the punctuation used here)

And there, hanging from the handle of  
Becky’s door, hanging and still swinging,  
was a large steel hook.

Legato (smooth and flowing)

# Repetition

Repetition is often used to emphasise a point.

To ensure that an idea stays with the reader.

The character or author really means it.

Also used to underline the monotony of a task.

‘Give me – what I need for the  
Death Journey. Then get your  
things.’

The Death Journey. No. No.

'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver

# Texture

Texture in music means layers.

A basic sentence is like a solo performance.

Add a clause or add adjectives (another instrument or a vocal harmony)

A simple sentence also has weight and purpose. The writer must choose the purpose of the sentence as the composer does the layers in their piece of music.

In the flat above  
Coraline's, under the  
roof, was a crazy old man  
with a big moustache.

'Coraline' by Neil Gaiman

# Executive Function & Cognitive Flexibility

Executive Function refers to a set of mental processes that help people plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully.

The key components are:

Working memory: Holding information in mind while processing it (e.g., remembering instructions while doing a task).

Cognitive flexibility: Adapting to changing situations and shifting between tasks.

Inhibition: Resisting impulses and controlling behavior (e.g., waiting your turn).





# Contact

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Musical Styles  
& Composers



Musical Snacks



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