



Music Overview

“In music, we explore a range of different musical genres which allows us to create melody, harmony and rhythm.”

Music is one of the performing arts that has the most impact and influence on our daily lives and provides an outlet for creative expression in every sphere of society. At Ellington Primary School, we recognise the importance and value of music and aim to reflect this in our curriculum. For many years, we have provided regular opportunities for children to learn the skills required to play a musical instrument via external teachers, with high quality lessons in the classroom laying the foundations of music theory and allowing opportunities for musical appraisal and discussion, as well as exploring composition. We regularly try to take groups of children outside of the school environment to perform for a range of audiences, developing the children's confidence.

In classroom music lessons, teachers expose the children to a wide range of music that they can listen to and appraise. They participate in a range of activities to develop particular music skills, including singing, improvising and composing alongside their classmates.

Purpose of study

Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. A high-quality music education should engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they should develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon.

Aims

The national curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils:

- perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians
- learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence

- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the interrelated dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations

Attainment targets

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

Subject Content

Key Stage 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
- play tuned and untuned instruments musically
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the interrelated dimensions of music

Key stage 2

Pupils should be taught to sing and play musically with increasing confidence and control. They should develop an understanding of musical composition, organising and manipulating ideas within musical structures and reproducing sounds from aural memory.

Pupils should be taught to:

- play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- use and understand staff and other musical notations
- appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians
- develop an understanding of the history of music

[A link to the National Curriculum: Music Programmes of Study](#)

Curriculum

We have spent the last several years developing a curriculum program that combines the best that different resources have to offer, in order to deliver a varied and challenging sequence of learning to the pupils who come through the school. We carefully integrate a comprehensive scheme of work ('Kapow') with whole class instrument tuition in Lower Key Stage 2 and small ensemble lessons carried out by Rocksteady staff with children across different year groups.

Intent

Our music curriculum aims to inspire pupils to develop a lifelong love of music, sparking curiosity, joy and self-expression through engaging musical experience. We will build core practical skills in performing and composing, teaching children how to sing and play tuned and untuned instruments. Musical understanding will be developed by building knowledge of key elements like pitch, tempo, dynamics and structure. We will also explore diverse musical traditions, showing awareness of a wide range of music genres, historical periods and global cultures.

Our music curriculum is underpinned by our curriculum drivers:

Aspirations

We constantly strive to raise aspirations through our music teaching. Participating in high quality music teaching can help children realise their creative potential, and their ability in music is not held back in any way if they feel less confident in more traditionally 'academic' subjects. All children have a chance to shine when demonstrating musical skill, and the fact that we provide whole class tuition in musical instruments free-of-charge to the pupils means that musical development is not linked with economic standing and is open to all.

Wider World

Exploring and discussing music is a hugely accessible way to discover a wealth of information about different countries and cultures around the world, as well as giving us an insight into historical and culture changes over time. Each of our units of work involves listening to and appraising music in various genres, and by the time they leave year six, pupils will have been exposed to a huge variety of musical traditions. All of this aims to broaden the children's horizons and give them an insight into the wider world, developing tolerance and encouraging respectful sharing of views and opinions.

Independent Thinking

Through the music curriculum, children develop transferable skills such as team-working, leadership, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and presentation and performance skills. These skills are vital to children's development as learners and as independent thinkers. They also have a wider application in their

general lives outside and beyond school, where we hope that pupils from Ellington show confidence in themselves and high levels of independence as they move through the school.

Implementation

Weekly music lessons / Regular 'music days' (dependent on year group timetable)

In each Kapow lesson, pupils will actively participate in musical activities drawn from a range of styles and traditions, developing their musical skills and their understanding of how music works. Lessons incorporate a range of teaching strategies from independent tasks, paired and group work as well as improvisation and teacher-led performances. Lessons are 'hands-on' and incorporate movement and dance elements as well as making cross curricular links with other areas of learning.

Differentiated guidance is available for every lesson to ensure that lessons can be accessed by all pupils and opportunities to stretch pupils' learning are available when required. Knowledge organisers for each unit support pupils in building a foundation of factual knowledge by encouraging recall of key facts and vocabulary.

External music teaching

Our year 4 children have an additional weekly ukulele lesson as a group, in addition to the Kapow units of work that they take part in. This fantastic opportunity gives them approximately 18 weeks' worth of instrument tuition free of charge and allows them to apply all of the understanding of music that they have built up during Early Years and Key Stage 1 in a practical, visible way. They can then continue this learning in the summer term of year 4 as well as in year 5 and 6 by taking part in a weekly ukulele club to extend their learning. Children can also sign up for Rocksteady instrument tuition, where they specialise in one instrument (vocals, keyboard, drums, guitar or bass) and receive weekly tuition in a small group, to learn how to practise and perform together as a band.

Performance opportunities

Children at Ellington Primary School are given frequent opportunities to demonstrate their musical skill as part of group performances. This happens on a small scale at the end of 'Kapow' units, where children perform to each other or have videos recorded and shared at home. Periodically, parents are invited into school to hear the children's progress, particularly when they have been working hard to learn an instrument at school. Through the year, the pupils also prepare songs to perform as part of Harvest or Christmas performances. Children are offered opportunities to perform out of school as and when opportunities arise, whether through events

organised at local venues such as the Glasshouse International Centre for Music in Gateshead or performing at the Ellington Ladies Club Christmas dinner event with the school choir.

What will I see if I visit a music lesson at Ellington?

Knowledge Check:

An opportunity at the start of the lesson to revisit prior learning to support with the recall and retention of key knowledge as well as addressing misconceptions.

Creative Quality First Teaching:

Teachers use and adapt the 'Kapow' units of work to ensure that they are delivering high quality and inclusive music teaching for all children in their class. SEND pupils are supported by strategies specific to music lessons, such as one-to-one demonstration of skills and visual aids. Children take part in regular paired and group tasks which stimulates classroom dialogue, articulation of concepts and development of shared understanding.

Clear Instruction:

Children are supported in each stage of learning via clear instruction from the teacher. Musical vocabulary, particularly the terms included in the 'interrelated dimensions of music' are introduced gradually and in a range of practical contexts, ensuring thorough understanding as the children move through the school.

Skilful teacher questioning:

Teachers use effective questioning to uncover misconceptions and address them as they occur.

Work we are proud of:

Children are encouraged to perform confidently and enjoy sharing their progress and skills with classmates. Music lessons are often focussed on a performance element which is sometimes shared with parents, adding to the children's pride in their achievements.

Creative, safe and supportive environment:

Children and adults work together to make classrooms safe and happy places to be. Mistakes are celebrated and seen as opportunities to learn. Children are reminded of personal safety and risk assessment. We use the Zones of Regulation to support children in making positive choices around their behaviour and refer to class charters and school rules.

Links to our curriculum drivers and school values:

Wherever possible, teachers highlight links to curriculum drivers and school values so that children recognise their importance and support their learning, for example links may be made to careers.

Lock It In:

Completed in the plenary, this activity is an opportunity to assess key learning from the lesson and is used to support future planning.

Impact

We are proud of the impact that our music curriculum has on the pupils of Ellington Primary School. By the time they reach year 6, the pupils have enjoyed a well-balanced, diverse and creative range of musical experiences. They will have encountered numerous opportunities to perform and share their musical skills as well as being able to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, hugely strengthening their musical understanding. The music curriculum has been carefully structured to ensure that prior knowledge is continually referred to so that children can make links between the knowledge they gain in different year groups. Both individually and as part of small and large groups, pupils are constantly challenged to engage creatively and take pride in their musical achievements, in and out of the classroom. Children at Ellington have a firm understanding of the significance and joy of music and the way that it is embedded in cultures all around the world and leave our school with a firm foundation in musical skills that can be nurtured and developed as they move through secondary school and further education.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their commitment to musical learning, and particularly the benefits of learning to perform together and working collaboratively to gain skills in different areas of music.

Pupil Voice, July 2026:

“I feel happy in music because learning the melodies makes me happy.”

“When we make our own lyrics, it makes me feel unique.”

“I like being in a group because I don’t like singing solo but in a group, other people help me.”

“Everyone in our class was confident.”

“I like the skills of learning an instrument.”

We take care to ensure that all children have full access to the music curriculum, by building a curriculum that is accessible to all, through clear sharing of key vocabulary and careful scaffolding of activities where appropriate. The naturally collaborative nature of musical learning means that confidence can be built together and children are incredibly encouraging of one another when participating in musical activities. Teachers are skilled at adapting resources to ensure that all children can be included and make progress.

We are proud of the range of opportunities offered to the children across the school in music. Year groups regularly work towards performances which can be shared

with parents, who support the children brilliantly in their musical endeavours. We actively seek opportunities to take groups of children out of school to perform to the wider public, which boosts the pupils' confidence hugely. All children in Key Stage 2 have the chance to be a part of our school choir, singing in harmony and taking part in competitions and special performances in and around our community. We have seen a large uptake in recent years in musical clubs offered to pupils and excellent levels of enthusiasm.

Overall, pupils leave Ellington Primary School with:

- **Raised levels of confidence and self-esteem** through the numerous opportunities to perform and share their progress in music with each other, and wider audiences
- **Creativity and innovation**, demonstrated through work on composition and improvisation
- **Appreciation of different cultures**, due to the wealth of musical traditions they have been exposed to over their time at Ellington Primary School
- **Pride in their abilities** which comes from the steady progression of and building up of skills and key knowledge and understanding

In the coming years, we hope to build the children's ability to appreciate different genres of music and confidently use musical vocabulary to discuss them, as well as developing small ensemble skills in greater depth.

All of this combined means that the music curriculum at Ellington is succeeding in engaging and inspiring pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and we believe that this will go from strength to strength in the coming years.