

The Music Programmes of Study: key stages 1

Delivering the National Curriculum through Ocarinas

National Curriculum in England

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.

The Ocarina gives children an instrumental voice at the earliest opportunity so they can participate fluently in the 'language of music'. They play tunes straight away, progressing more rapidly and easily than with any other tuned musical instrument. Ocarinas can be introduced by general class teachers as well as by specialists, demonstrating that everyone can be 'musical' and that music need not be the sole preserve of highly trained experts.

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

Ocarina-playing offers the broadest repertoire for all young musicians to play, sing and evaluate: pupils listen to and make the music themselves with ocarinas. 'Play your Ocarina [Book 1](#)' has themes by Beethoven and Dvorak for everyone to play, along with music across a range of genres, styles and traditions. Audio CDs support both listening and playing.

- 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

Singing together is key to playing **the Ocarina** and to all the repertoire. The Ocarina is at the same pitch as children's singing voices. Soloists, small groups, whole classes and larger ensembles can perform to a high standard with voices and ocarinas together. Singing each song before playing encourages musicality and music reading. The bespoke teacher and pupil books guide classes into learning to play the Ocarina at every age. They help pupils identify and play notes, make high or low sounds, and start and stop together. They also introduce intonation, expression, pitch, and all the "interrelated dimensions of music" through doing.

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

Ocarina players (and their teachers) learn to read a variety of musical notations from the very first lesson, including staff notation. They experience all the inter-related dimensions of music through actively performing, and they can communicate fluently and expressively at an early stage with the ocarina. This naturally leads to improvising and composing.

Singing plus playing instruments are two key elements in any music curriculum because everyone has a voice. By wearing Ocarinas, pupils can swap seamlessly between listening, singing and playing. Entire lessons can focus on pupils making music because they are instrument-ready throughout. We have found that singing the tune regularly helps the children to become attuned to the music and supports them in success on the Ocarina.

Playing Ocarinas is engaging and inspiring because Ocarinas are...

- inclusive – everyone can join in
- intuitive – children and teachers know what to do
- inexpensive – schools and parents can afford them
- impressive – children can play full-octave tunes straight away
- interactive – for listening, learning and performing

Through the book 1-2-3 Ocarina, each song provides a new musical experience to build knowledge and develop pupils' instrumental and vocal skills simultaneously. Through listening, playing and singing, pupils also explore and use the "inter-related dimensions" of music.

■ 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.

All these targets are attainable through whole-class ocarina playing and performing.

■ Subject content/Ocarina input

Key stage 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
ocarina materials are designed to sing first. Chanting lyrics rhythmically helps children to internalise rhythms before playing them accurately on the ocarina.
- play tuned and untuned instruments musically
ocarinas are the simplest and most versatile of all tuned musical instruments; their simplicity makes high quality musical performance possible at Key stage 1.
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
The backing track materials are arranged, performed and recorded to an excellent standard, introducing children to many genres of music, all of which they can eventually play themselves.
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.
once children have the skills to play the ocarina, they can be encouraged to experiment by asking questions such as “how many parts should a round be played in, and what will it sound like with voices only, ocarinas only, or both together”. They can also make first attempts at individual and group compositions through games, guided choices and their own intuitive experiments on the ocarina. Compositions can be easily notated using ocarina notation.

■ The broader developments of skills

Our Year 2 children are actively involved in music by singing, moving, chanting, clapping, listening, and playing instruments. All are given the opportunity to play a tuned instrument and learn the language of notation (how to read musical notes on a staff).

The 4-hole Oc® is small enough for little fingers to handle, and easy enough for very young players to play. Its sound is gentle, even when large groups play together. Most importantly, pupils at KS1 are able to follow the Ocarina-chart music, even before they have learned to read: OcPix™ tablature promotes reading-readiness by helping pupils identify and play a full octave of notes and perform a wide variety of songs and tunes.

A six-year-old will normally learn new skills far more quickly than a five-year-old.

Year 2 sing the songs, clap the rhythms, and play the tunes bit-by-bit, line-by-line and all the way through, with or without backings. Most importantly, they enjoy music because it is done with a great sense of fun as they learn to play together.

At Whitehall we use the '1-2-3 Ocarina' book to deliver the learning. We find, in whole-class music lessons, that there is a broad range of abilities. Each child will be developing at a different rate. We make sure we give time to the children for them to play. We allow quick-learners the chance to shine by giving any, who "get it" early, opportunities to demonstrate their skills to the rest of the class.

We use easier-to-play tunes to showcase the abilities of those who are slower to pick things up.

Baseline skills gained are: the dexterity of holding and playing the Ocarina using the first two fingers to change notes; breath-control for creating a steady stream of breath, rather than just blowing; and reading a variety of notations. Control of the first two fingers is well-developed from 12 months onwards; reading Ocarina charts predates alphabetic reading; following music down the page promotes reading-readiness.

By playing Ocarinas, pupils develop general musicianship through listening, singing, and performing. They can carry on playing throughout KS2 and into KS3 years using newly extended repertoire, and those who wish can take external Music Teacher Board (MTB) exams, from pre-Grade to Grade 5, at any stage in their school career.