

Unit 1 Ongoing skills

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit highlights the musical skills that require regular practice and ongoing development throughout the key stage. It focuses on the development of the singing voice and other essential musical skills (listening skills, aural memory and physical skills) that should be a regular part of classroom work week-by-week. All the activities in this unit are designed so that they can be taught in short periods when opportunities arise.

The unit is designed to be used flexibly throughout the key stage. The material in this unit can be used in any order. The 'points to note' column includes suggestions about how the activities could be extended when the material is revisited.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

The intention is that this unit will form the heart of the music programme at key stage 1. It will be extended by, and support, all the other units for this key stage. When teaching material from this unit, attention should be given to the learning objectives of the other units being taught at the same time.

This unit can make a significant contribution to literacy by developing pupils' confidence in the use of their voices. It also contributes to all other learning through the development of listening skills and aural memory. Singing, in particular, can contribute to the children's spiritual and social development by lifting spirits, focusing concentration and developing group identity.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children and teachers have:

- sung a range of songs
- used their voices in different ways, eg *speaking, whispering, singing*
- listened to a variety of music and begun to recognise ways in which sounds are used

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- using their voices in different ways, eg *singing, whispering, talking, humming*
- singing techniques, eg *breathing, posture*
- the musical elements being taught at the same time in the other units, eg *high, low, loud, quiet, fast, slow, rhythm*

RESOURCES

Stimulus:

- songs
- music
- words

Sound sources:

- voices
- body percussion
- classroom instruments

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

sing simple songs from memory with enjoyment, some expression and a sense of the shape of the melody; use their voices confidently in a variety of ways; listen carefully and recall short rhythmic and melodic patterns; show physical control when playing musical instruments and responding to music

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

recognise that their voices can be used in different ways, and begin to find their singing voices; clap short rhythmic patterns, but will need help when recalling longer phrases or talking about pieces of music; respond physically to music

some children will have progressed further and will:

sing simple songs accurately at a given pitch and with clear diction and expression; identify subtle changes in sounds and recall complete phrases; show considerable physical control of instruments and of their bodies when performing and responding to music

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

SINGING SONGS WITH CONTROL AND USING THE VOICE EXPRESSIVELY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use different voices and find their singing voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to use their voices to make sound effects for stories and poems, <i>eg animal sounds in Old Macdonald, spooky sounds in stories about castles, the voices of the three bears in Goldilocks.</i> Explore different types of voice using a question and answer activity, <i>eg Teacher: Have you brought your whispering/talking/loud/humming/singing voice? Class (using the appropriate voice): Yes we have! Yes we have!</i> Repeat the activity. Ask a child to lead. Use a hand puppet and ask individual children to help the puppet talk and sing using different voices. Play call-and-response games based on the minor third, <i>eg</i> <i>Teacher: Where is Michael sitting today?</i> G G E E G G G E <i>Class: There he is. (Michael: Here I am.)</i> G G E G G E To improve diction, ask the children to chant the words of the song, speaking the words very clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> find their singing voice and use their voices confidently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the children to enjoy the sounds of words through making nonsense words and phrases for others to copy and using different voices when reading or making up plays. Keep two chime bars available which make the minor third so the pitch interval can be remembered (G and E or F and D). Extension activity: When the children have begun finding their singing voices, introduce breathing activities, <i>eg ask the children to take a drink of air from a large, imaginary glass. (They must not tip their heads back as they drink!) Can you feel the cold air at the back of your throat?</i> Encourage the children to breathe in this way at the beginning of every song. Discourage the children from raising their shoulders when breathing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop an awareness of phrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create activities where the children practice selected phrases and/or passages of songs using different voices, <i>eg whispering, high voice, etc.</i> Show the children how to use the thinking voice by singing words or phrases in their heads, that is, mouthing the words without making any sound. Show phrases in songs by drawing a rainbow shape in the air as the class sings each phrase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise phrase lengths and know when to breathe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension activity: Sing sentences to tunes based on the minor third, <i>eg G E or F D</i>, and ask the children to copy them, <i>eg It's a lovely day (It's a lovely day).</i> Choose songs that have different phrase lengths and teach the children to breathe at the end of chosen phrases. In songs with short phrases encourage children to sing more than one phrase in one breath.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to sing with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Follow the leader': Get the children used to looking at a conductor for instructions while they are singing. At first it should be the teacher. Agree a range of gestures that mean start, stop, slower, faster, louder, quieter. Sing songs in large groups, <i>eg two classes together, or the whole school</i>, to develop confidence and enjoyment of a shared experience. Focus on improving the quality of singing by applying everything learned in class singing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sing with awareness of other performers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the children to stand when singing. When singing in a group, encourage the children to have a focal point to perform to, this may be the conductor, teacher, a picture, the clock in the hall. Encourage the children to listen to each other. Choose songs that do not have too many words or verses. Repetition at this stage is important. Call and response songs are particularly appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to control pulse and rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play singing games that use actions and movement, <i>eg London Bridge, Head and shoulders, If you're happy and you know it.</i> Make the actions match the speed and rhythm of the singing. Help the class to keep together. Use chants and rhymes to show the children how to keep to a steady beat, <i>eg One potato, two potato.</i> Get them to tap the pulse on different parts of the body as they sing, <i>eg shoulders, chest, thighs.</i> Explore the effect of making it faster/slower. Ask a child to set the tempo for a song or chant by tapping their knees to a steady beat before they begin. The rest of the class listen to 'catch the speed' before they join in. Ask the children to clap the rhythm of the song while singing (the word rhythms), showing silent beats (rests) with the movement of the hands. Clap the rhythm of a song known to the children. <i>Can you identify which song? Stop in the middle. Can you clap the rest of the song?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sing with a sense of awareness of pulse and control of rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use movement and/or dance whenever possible to reinforce the feeling of pulse. This may need more space than is available in the classroom. Extension activity: Ask one group to tap/clap a pulse while another group taps/claps the rhythms of the words. Extension activity: Let the class try to get slower and faster together without any direction. Ask the children to set a slower or faster tempo for the song. Children will enjoy singing songs at very different speeds. Remember that slow songs need a stronger sense of pulse and that faster songs require greater clarity of diction.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to control pitch

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Play 'Blast off': the children crouch down on their haunches, then, after countdown, slowly rise like a rocket and take off into space. As they rise, their voices rise in pitch.
- In 'Splash down' they reverse the procedure.
- Play 'Switchback': the children swoop up and down over and over again as though they are on a switchback at the fair. The pitch of their voices should rise up and down as they do.
- Play 'Hump bridge': the children hum for a long time on one note then suddenly make a rising and falling sound to illustrate travelling over the bridge. They return to the starting note.
- Play 'Upstairs and downstairs': the children describe climbing up and down stairs by making their voices rise and fall in pitch. Help the children move up and down in steps to match the notes of a scale, eg *C D E F G*. They can sometimes only go halfway up.
- Tell the children to 'take their voices for a walk' by making a vowel sound and following the movements of the teacher's hand. The voice can go up, down or stay the same.
- Sing songs based on the minor third, eg *It's raining, it's pouring*.
- Draw lines on the board using the different shapes, eg *hump bridge*, and ask the children to 'sing the line' using an open vowel sound, eg 'ah'. Point to the line and use the board to travel along it as the children sing. Ask individual children to act as conductors and explore going faster and slower.

- to control the expressive elements, eg *timbre, dynamics, tempo*

- Sing songs that will stimulate the children's imagination, eg *songs about interesting people, animals, themselves*. Ask them questions. *Is it happy, sad, cross, calming? Which are the key words that portray the setting, mood or action of the song? Can you find a way of singing these words to create the intended effect?*
- Sing songs in different moods, eg *Rain, rain, go away using a cross voice. Does it work if you sing it dreamily? See-saw using a calm lilting voice. Does it work if you sing fast?*
- Sing songs that are accumulative, eg *One man went to mow*, and ask children to add their own verses – this will give them a sense of ownership and provide opportunities to explore different ideas and feelings.
- Sing songs written for different purposes, eg *lullabies, worksongs, singing games*, and explore how they should be sung.

LISTENING, MEMORY AND MOVEMENT

- to listen carefully and develop their aural memory

- Draw attention to sounds as they happen. *What sounds can you hear now? What is making the different sounds? What sounds are close/far away?*
- Help children improve their own work. *How can you improve your work? What was good? What could have been better?*
- Help children focus their listening. *Can you hear the way the sounds get louder and quieter? When does the music change?*
- Play 'Copy cats': Clap short rhythmic phrases and sing short melodic phrases for children to copy, eg *a phrase from a song without the words sung to a vowel sound*.
- Help children recall and remember sounds. *How does this piece of music start (and finish)? What happens in the middle?* Encourage the children to learn songs, chants and rhymes by heart.

- to develop physical response

- Encourage the children to respond to music using body percussion, eg *clapping, tapping knees, stamping*.
- Encourage the children to move, eg *stamping, shivering*, to sounds made by individual percussion instruments and recorded music. Make up simple dance patterns, eg *step, step, jump, curl*, and respond to different moods through dance.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- begin to sing with control of pitch, eg *following the shape of the melody*

- make connections between symbols and sounds showing understanding of how sounds go higher and lower

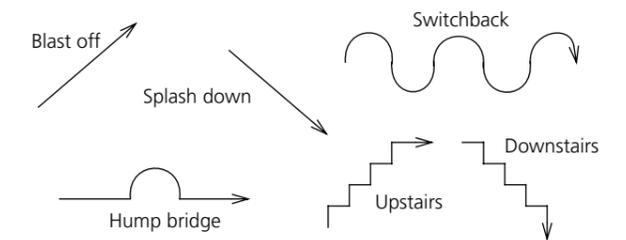
- demonstrate some control of the expressive elements, eg *timbre, dynamics, tempo*, when singing

- identify different sound sources
- make improvements to their own work
- identify well-defined musical features
- recall and remember short songs and sequences and patterns of sounds

- respond physically when performing, composing and appraising music

POINTS TO NOTE

- Remember that young children often confuse the terms *high/low* and *loud/quiet*, eg *turn the TV up, he was talking in a low voice*.
- Extension activity:** Give children the chance to sing alone as this will develop confidence and help them match the given pitch with their voices. When they sing alone, they might sing an approximation of the tune, following the contour of the melody, sing the song at their own pitch or sing at the given pitch. Initially all responses should be accepted and praised.
- In all these activities use hand gestures to indicate high or low and getting higher or lower. Use vowel sounds for all the games described.



- Facial expressions can help reinforce the mood of the song and help change the timbre of the voice. Talk about how we use our voices to stress words and show how we feel.
- Extension activity:** Discuss different purposes of songs and how these may change the way the song is sung, eg *a sea shanty*.

- Extension activity:** Ask the children to listen for more subtle sounds and find more words to describe them.
- Try to use the same vocabulary to describe sounds in every situation, eg *use loud and quiet (not loud and soft)*. Use 'high' and 'low' only when talking about differently pitched sounds (not 'high' and 'low' for volume).
- Help the children to appreciate silence and encourage them to be quiet before the music begins and after it ends.
- Simple games such as 'Copy cat' will highlight those children who need help in developing their aural memory. Try starting with very short phrases that everyone can remember and then gradually increase the length of phrases used to stretch the more able.

- Physical response is a very important aspect of musical development. Children should be constantly encouraged to move to music and to develop physical skills when using musical instruments.
- Let the sounds indicate to the class how they should move – try to use words to set up the activity and then allow the children to respond to different sounds with only limited verbal instructions.
- This aspect of musical development has a direct link to the dance units in the physical education scheme of work.

EXTENSION AND FUTURE LEARNING

In addition to the examples given in the 'Points to note' section, children could go on to:

- apply skills learned through singing in their English work, *eg clarity of diction, use of the expressive voice in drama, reading out loud and public speaking*
- apply to dance those skills learned through physical response to music
- celebrate their singing through providing class performances for assembly time and school concerts

ENRICHMENT

- The class could attend concerts given by a variety of different singing groups.
- Professional singers could be invited into the school to perform and sing with the children.
- Parents could be encouraged to contribute to concerts and assemblies.
- The class could attend concerts and meet performers to discuss and share different styles of singing, *eg operatic, soul, gospel, jazz, Asian*.

REPERTOIRE

The suggestions given in the unit are only examples that could be used with the activities given in the unit. Wherever possible, teachers should use their own repertoire.

