

Unit 8 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 for years 3 and 4. It builds on unit 1 and will be extended by, and support, all the other units for this phase. 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 confidence in the use of the voice and the ability to use and perceive expression in language. It also contributes to all other learning through the development of listening skills and aural memory. Singing, in particular, can lift spirits, focus concentration and develop group identity, and therefore has much to contribute to children's overall development.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children and teachers have:

- sung a variety of songs
- developed their skills through the activities described in unit 1

VOCABULARY

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

- singing techniques, *eg breathing, posture*
- the musical elements being taught at the same time in the other units, *eg high/low, different speeds, types of sound*

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 accuracy of pitch, in a group or alone; understand the importance of articulating the words to communicate the song to an audience; listen carefully, with attention to detail; demonstrate increasing aural memory and physical control

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

participate with enjoyment in singing activities in a larger group, but will need help to match the pitch accurately; listen attentively for short periods, but will need help to sustain concentration and to remember longer phrases

some children will have progressed further and will:

sing in tune alone or act as leader of a group in a call and response song; suggest ways to enhance their performance of the songs; identify subtle differences and changes; remember longer phrases quickly and confidently

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

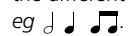
LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

SINGING SONGS WITH CONTROL AND USING THE VOICE EXPRESSIVELY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop their singing voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing a variety of songs with the children and ask them to stand when singing. Work with them on posture and breathing. Encourage the children to lift their faces by smiling. Tell them to think of a lovely surprise. 'Oo' sounds: Find words in songs that have an 'oo' sound. Ask the children to push their lips forwards away from their teeth. Ask the children to imagine putting a finger in their mouths, then taking it out and leave their mouths in the same shape. 'Ah' sounds: Ask the children to breathe through an open mouth, feeling the air cold at the back of their throat. Sing call and response songs, eg <i>echo songs of increasing complexity</i>. Ask the children to improvise a sung response to a sung question, eg <i>What do you like to eat?</i> At first, base questions and answers on the two notes that make the cuckoo interval. Use either notes G and E, or for a slightly lower pitch, F and D. Give the children a framework for their answer, eg <i>What do you like to eat? I like...; What is Joseph good at? He's good at...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sing with confidence, using a wider vocal range understand how mouth shapes can affect voice sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help the children improve their posture, ask them to try standing and pulling the tops of their ears. Use analogies, eg <i>pretend you're a puppet, and feel your string being pulled from the top of your head</i>. Call and response songs involve a leader (or small group of singers) and a chorus (the rest of the class). Either the teacher or a selected child makes the calls which are then copied by the larger group. Call and response songs are used extensively in singing because they provide opportunity for more confident singers to lead others. The simple text also allows the large group to focus on accuracy of pitch. This musical genre is used in many cultures. Extension activity: Encourage children to take a leading role in call and response songs. When using the cuckoo notes some children will add one note higher, that is, A or G respectively which makes the catchy and taunting 'ner-ner-ner-ner-ner' pattern often used in playground chants (G E A G E).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use the thinking voice (internalising) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing songs and develop the thinking voice, eg <i>Tony Chestnut</i>, <i>John Brown's body</i>, <i>Heads and shoulders</i>, by omitting words and replacing them by actions. 'Traffic lights': Make a flash card with a picture of traffic lights. The children sing a song they know. As the teacher points to a particular light, the children perform the song as follows: green – children sing the song; amber – children stop singing and clap the rhythm of the words; red – children stop everything but continue to hear the song in their heads, that is, they use their <i>thinking</i> voices (internalising). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> internalise sounds by singing parts of a song 'in their heads' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension activity: Extend the children's improvisation by singing conversations using three or more notes of a pentatonic scale eg <i>A G E (C)</i>. Children will vary in their ability to improvise vocally. Some children will still only manage the two cuckoo notes, and will need plenty of practice and reinforcement at echoing short pentatonic phrases.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to use known songs to develop control of pulse and rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing action songs with the children. Ask the children to respond to the songs by making the actions match the rhythm and tempo exactly. Sing songs at different tempi (speeds), while the children maintain a steady pulse. 'Pass the bean bag': Sit the class in a circle and ask them to pass a bean bag around on the pulse as they sing. Ask them to stand up and walk on the spot to the pulse. Divide the class in half, one half taps the pulse on their knees while the other half claps the rhythm of a song they know. Develop recognition of the metre of the song being sung by tapping on knees for the strong beat and clapping hands on the weaker beat, eg <i>tap, clap, clap, clap for Frère Jacques</i> and <i>Pop goes the weasel</i>. Encourage the children to set a tempo for a song by tapping the right number of beats before the class sings a song, eg <i>four claps for Frère Jacques</i>. One child starts clapping a steady beat, others join in. Teach the children to tap a phrase from a song as an ostinato accompaniment to the song. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sing with awareness of pulse and control of rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not try to rush the concept of pulse. Children need lots of practice at internalising a pulse to keep a steady beat when playing a rhythmic pattern successfully in a group. When walking to a pulse and clapping the rhythm of a song, it helps to walk on the spot before moving round the room. Limit the number of children using untuned instruments when performing the rhythms of songs, lest the overall effect becomes cluttered and unmusical. Extension activity: Ask the children to work out for themselves the metre of different songs by tapping/clapping a pattern which fits, eg <i>tap, clap, clap, clap, or tap, clap, clap</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop awareness of simple structures (phrases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing known songs. Mark the phrases with rainbows in the air, eg <i>in Twinkle, twinkle there are 6 phrases, one for each line</i>. Encourage the children to note which phrases are the same, eg <i>in Twinkle, the first and fifth, the second and last and the third and fourth phrases are the same</i>. Match movements to different sections when listening to recorded music. <i>Which phrases in the song are similar? Which are different?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise simple structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension activity: Analyse the structure of the song, eg <i>if each phrase were to be given a letter name, the pattern for Twinkle, twinkle would be ABCCAB</i>. Explore other structures, eg <i>call and response in an African song, verse and chorus in a Scottish folk song</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognise changes in, and control, pitch about staff notation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing a familiar song with the children and experiment with different starting notes and discuss the effect of making the pitch higher or lower. Sing songs with big jumps, eg <i>Hot cross buns</i>, and stepwise movements, eg <i>the beginning of Unto us a child is born</i>. Use hand movements to match these movements in the song. Sing songs and use the hands to show when the notes go higher or lower. Sing songs using written words and staff notations (above or below the words). Learn the song by note and then point out where the notes go higher and lower. Show the children enlarged copies of the songs they are singing. Point out the time signature (the numbers at the beginning of the music). Only refer to the top number which generally gives the metre, eg <i>3/4 beat pattern</i>. Point out the stave as a ladder with notes placed higher or lower to match the higher or lower sounds. Show how the song moves along the line just as when reading. Point out the different shapes of the notes and how these tell how long or short the note should be sung, eg . Let them become familiar with this form of notation before adding any more detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sing in tune sing using notation as a support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to hum the starting note of a song before they begin so they all concentrate on matching pitch. All children should be helped to sing in tune with the group. Place the stronger singers alongside those who find singing in tune more difficult. Using different starting notes will help to extend the range of children's voices and develop understanding that songs do not need to be fixed at a particular pitch. The use of staff notation should only be used to support the singing. Repeated use (without direct teaching) will help the children become familiar with this form of notation. When the time signature is 6/8 it is usually a two-beat metre, that is, <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>6</u>.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- about how to express the meaning of songs

- Sing two songs of contrasting moods. *How can we use dynamics and tempo to create the mood of the song?* Ask the children to add actions or movements to enhance the performance of the songs.
- Divide the class or group into two. Ask each half to sing one of the songs, then discuss with the class which half communicated the mood of the song most effectively, and how they achieved it, *eg Did your stance, posture or facial expression influence the mood of the song? Were all the words clear?*

CHILDREN

- sing expressively with awareness and control of the expressive elements, *eg timbre, tempo, dynamics*

- Children will vary enormously in their response to the dramatic requirements of the song. The serious or shy child may be enjoying and engaging with the song as much as the most extrovert member of the group, who is more able to communicate a sense of pleasure.
- When encouraging the children to sing expressively, ask them to place different degrees of emphasis on consonants (not everything is stressed) and use dynamic contrast to match the words of the song, *eg quiet singing for the gentle section of the song.*
- **Extension activity:** Children could listen to singing actors, *eg in opera, musicals. Are they just singing or becoming the characters?* Children could sing a song which includes different characters. Encourage individuals and groups to act/become the character.

LISTENING, MEMORY AND MOVEMENT

- to listen with attention to detail and develop aural memory

- Ask the children to listen to music with an awareness of the expressive use of pitch, *eg Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle from Pictures at an exhibition, Mussorgsky*, or the use of high notes in the climax of a saxophone solo.
- 'Copy cats': Keeping a steady pulse, the teacher claps rhythms for children to copy instantly. Include rests and use longer phrases.
- 'Keep it going': Ask the children to clap a rhythm over and over again. This is an ostinato. Build up a class piece using rhythmic ostinati. Some children clap one ostinato while others clap a different one.
- 'Put a pattern in space': The teacher claps four steady beats and leaves a gap of four steady beats. A child improvises a four-beat rhythmic pattern in the space. The teacher claps another four beats and looks to another child to provide the next rhythm, and so on.
- 'Question and answer': Children take it in turns to clap to each other, keeping a steady pulse. Before starting they should agree the metre – how many beats in each pattern.
- 'Tuneful conversations': Give pairs of children a selection of notes, *eg E G A or D F A*, on a tuned percussion instrument or keyboard. Ask them to make up melodic patterns as a musical conversation, one questions and the other answers. Ask them to write their melodies down using the names of the notes and dot notation so they can recall their tunes in the next lesson.
- 'Play by ear': On a xylophone, children work out how to play a simple phrase played by the teacher or another child. On a xylophone, children work out how to play simple known tunes.
- Help the children improve their own work. *What was good? Why? What could be better? How?*

- identify and recall rhythmic and melodic patterns

- **Extension activity:** Play a longer piece of music. The aim should be to increase gradually the children's concentration span. Remember that careful listening can be very tiring.
- **Extension activity:** Ask children to improvise their own rhythmic patterns for a steady pulse and with a given metre (2, 3 or 4).
- **Extension activity:** Ask pairs of children to choose a metre. One claps the pulse, making the first beat of each metre slightly stronger. The other adds a rhythmic pattern which fits the metre.
- **Extension activity:** Children could work in groups and clap two or more ostinato patterns simultaneously.
- Keeping a steady beat is a real challenge, as some children tend to gradually get faster as they get more excited/involved. A metronome can be helpful.
- **Extension activity:** Extend 'Tuneful conversations' by asking one child to play an ascending phrase and the other to answer with a descending phrase. Each child has to remember their phrase so that they can play it again.
- **Extension activity:** Try adding words to the phrases and create a simple song.

- improve their own work through analysis and evaluation

- to respond to structure in music through movement and dance

- Play the children extracts of music which uses different tempi and rhythmic patterns. Ask the children to respond to different rhythmic patterns using dance. Ask the children to tap their knees in time to recorded music with a strong beat matching the metre, *eg tap, clap, clap, clap, or tap, clap, clap.*
- Make up larger movements.
- Match movements to sections of a piece of music, always using the same movement if a section is repeated, *eg recognise solo (smaller group) and ensemble (larger group) sections in a concerto.* Stand for ensemble and sit for solo.
- Put rhythm patterns together into a structure, *eg rhythm A, rhythm B, rhythm A.*
- Play some music for the children. *How does it make you feel?* Encourage a movement response. *What in the music made you respond in the way you did?*

- demonstrate the ability to recognise the use of structure and expressive elements through dance

- Children should be helped to begin to identify some common musical structures, *eg A B A and A B A C A D A.*

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 and use of the expressive voice in drama activities*
- apply skills learned through physical response to music in their dance activities in physical education
- celebrate their singing through providing class performances for assembly time and school concerts

ENRICHMENT

- The class could attend concerts given by a variety of singing groups and meet the group before or after the concert and sing with them.
- Professional singers could be invited into the school to perform and sing with the children.
- The class could visit local or national venues to experience different styles of singing, *eg opera, soul, gospel, jazz, Asian.*

REPERTOIRE

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

GLOSSARY

Cuckoo notes: Two notes three semitones apart, *eg G to E, F to D.*

Metre: The grouping of beats into stronger and weaker beats.

Ostinato: A repeated pattern that can be melodic and/or rhythmic.

Semitone: The smallest step between two notes on a keyboard using black and white notes. (Note that there are points where the smallest step is from white to white, *eg E to F, B to C.*)

Pentatonic scale: A series of five notes often made by using all the black notes of a keyboard, although it can sometimes be made using white notes, *eg C D E G A.* A pentatonic scale can centre around the cuckoo notes (minor third), *eg C D E G A*, and can be learned by extending the range from the minor third E G and adding A, then D, then C.

