



Music Curriculum Policy

September 2025

Signed (Chair of Trustees):	
Date:	September 2025
Review:	September 2026

Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Music Curriculum Policy

Content Page

1. Aims
2. How we teach Music
3. Music Curriculum Planning
4. The Foundation Stage
5. Teaching Music to children with special educational needs
6. Assessment and recording
7. Resources
8. Monitoring and review

Aim

We aim to provide music education that engages and inspires pupils to develop a love for music and their talents as musicians, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they will develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and listen with discrimination.

We align with the belief that music connects us through people and places in our ever-changing world. It is the most common language and is creative, collaborative, celebratory and challenging. In our schools, music can bring communities together through the shared endeavour of whole-school singing, ensemble playing, experimenting with the creative process and, through the love of listening to friends and fellow pupils, performing. The sheer joy of music-making can feed the soul of a school community, enriching each student while strengthening the shared bonds of support and trust which make a great school.

To align closely with the Model Music Curriculum 2021, at Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils should receive a minimum of one hour of teaching a week; this may take the form of short sessions spread across the week. In Years 3 or 4, it is recommended that each class should start a whole-class instrumental programme lasting a minimum of one term. The mandatory term will be supported by teachers from the local Music Education Hub. Opportunities for development should continue beyond the mandatory term. There should be access to both rhythmic and melodic instruments in Key Stages 1 and 2; this may be as part of the whole-class instrumental programme and/or in other classroom teaching. Arbor schools place emphasis on the value of a comprehensive music education.

Music has a rare and unique ability to bring people together; music-making can make a whole class, school and community feel connected to others and part of something bigger. Our music curriculum celebrates the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities as it does the leaps in technology that have made available new tools and adapted instruments, leading to improved access and greater choice for all pupils to realise their creative potential.

The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement states that teachers should set high expectations for every pupil, whatever their prior attainment. Teachers should use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset. Lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement.

The Model Music Curriculum sets out sequences of learning in the following key areas which, when taken together, all contribute towards the steadily increasing development of musicianship:

- Singing
- Listening
- Composing
- Performing/Instrumental Performance

The Model Music Curriculum (MMC) takes as its starting point the ambition that every young person should be able to experience music and to make progress. It is founded on the belief that music enriches individual lives as well as a school's wider community. The Model Music Curriculum (MMC) aims to support all pupils in their musical progression through the Key Stages. By offering a rich and varied musical framework that nurtures fundamental musical techniques alongside building musical knowledge, it offers a clear pathway towards mature musical understanding. Staff notation not only complements developing aural skills, memorisation, composition and improvising but also provides the opportunity for pupils to gain more independence in their learning, both in class and after they have left school. The foundations of this will be laid at primary school.

This model curriculum for the musical community to build upon takes account of the many different school contexts that exist within Arbor. Effective delivery is likely to come from a combination of schools, teachers, practitioners, professional ensembles, venues, and other Music Education Hub partners working collaboratively. This shared foundation will provide schools with a launchpad to access wider musical culture in which all can thrive and share the joy of music. For consolidation, pupils continue to study the same instrument from Y3 until the end of Y6. Each cohort learns a different instrument and these vary according to the Music specialists working in the schools.

National Curriculum

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 inter-related 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 inter-related 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.

How we teach Music

Singing lies at the heart of good music teaching. We encourage children to participate in a variety of musical experiences through which we aim to build up the confidence of all children and we make music an enjoyable learning experience. Our teaching focuses on developing the children's ability to sing with pitch and rhythmical accuracy and awareness of others. Through singing songs, children internalise the music and learn about its structure and organisation. We teach them to listen and to appreciate different forms of music. As children get older, we expect them to maintain their concentration for longer and to listen to more extended pieces of music. Children develop descriptive skills in music lessons when learning about how music can evoke feelings and emotions. We teach them the disciplined skills of recognising pulse and pitch. We often teach these together. We equip children to work collaboratively with others, combining their individual ideas to create, rehearse and present their own music. We also teach music software programmes and traditional staff notation.

We recognise that there are children of widely different musical abilities in all classes, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways by setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses; setting tasks of increasing difficulty (not all children complete all tasks); grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks to each ability group; providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child; using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Our children play a wide range of instruments, including the recorder, flute, ukulele, violin and percussion. We work with the borough's music service to ensure that all year groups in key stages one and two receive weekly instrumental lessons delivered by specialists. Our teaching ensures progression as they move through the school to develop expertise in particular musical instruments in line with the model music curriculum, which aligns with the national curriculum.

Additional Music Teaching

We provide additional music teaching to take into account children's starting points. We have a team of peripatetic music tutors that work closely with Arbor schools and their teaching is organised by the music leader of the trust. Parents who want their children to participate in any additional schemes on offer must purchase or hire the instrument and pay the additional music lesson fees on a termly basis. These lessons are normally taught to individuals who have chosen to learn one of a variety of instruments, such as the guitar, violin, trombone or flute. This is in addition to the normal music teaching of the school, and usually takes place during lunch time and/or after school.

Music Curriculum Planning

Our music curriculum is underpinned by the model music curriculum. It covers all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study for music as the basis for its curriculum planning. We have adapted the scheme so that the topics that the children study in music build upon prior learning. The belief that pupils should progress through key stages with their music understanding and skills drives the yearly and termly end points and composites. There are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each teaching unit. The planned progression built into the scheme of work means that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school.

Music composites are broken into weekly and termly components. The long-term plan maps the music topics studied in each term during the key stage. The music subject leader works this out in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. Through this programme of study, we teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum. We have adapted the medium-term plans from the model music curriculum and taken the expectations of the national curriculum into account.

The music subject leader works with class teachers and specialist music teachers to determine aspects they teach and how it must be delivered, in accordance with the termly composites. The music subject leader writes the daily lesson plans, which list the specific learning objectives of each lesson and is responsible for reviewing and monitoring delivery of these plans. The class teacher is responsible for keeping these individual plans, and the class teacher and music subject leader often discuss them on an informal basis. These plans are also shared with the specialist music teachers, who plan their whole class instrumental lessons to link in with the termly composites. Our music planning ensures progress in the breadth and range of musical experiences; increasing challenge and difficulty in musical activities; increasing confidence, sensitivity and creativity in the children's music-making.

Participation

Musical events

Our curriculum includes two formal performances annually for all year groups; a musical production and an orchestral concert. All children regardless of their abilities participate and perform to parents (virtually during pandemic) at both of these events. Musicals combine a range of skills, providing children with the opportunity to speak and sing with projection and expression, and with increasing self-awareness as they perform to an audience. The orchestral concerts, in contrast are a platform for pupils to present their work and communicate with others without using their voices at all, following and giving signals, listening to others and improvising, while demonstrating technical proficiency and musicality through their instruments. Pupils also present to parents the work they have been doing in their whole class instrumental lessons on a termly basis.

The school choirs and ensembles

We have two school choirs, which we encourage children to join. The choir meets on a weekly basis and, although its primary aim is to enable children to enjoy singing together, it also performs in public on a number of occasions throughout the year, for example at the Christmas carol concert. We believe that music enriches the lives of people, and so we wish to involve as many children as possible in musical activities. We have a school orchestra, enabling many pupils to play with instrumentalists of different ages and backgrounds, and when the opportunity arises, rehearsals are organised so that pupils can play and perform together in other ensemble groupings, e.g. a violin duet or a brass trio.

The Foundation Stage

We believe that music contributes to a child's personal and social development. Counting songs foster a child's mathematical ability and songs from different cultures increase a child's knowledge and understanding of the world. We teach music in our reception classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the musical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goal, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Teaching Music to children with special educational needs

We believe that all children are entitled to access to all subjects. The SEND Code of Practice demands that children with SEND are entitled to reasonable adjustments and access to the curriculum. Through our music teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the model music curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. We teach music to all children, whatever their ability.

Music forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs. Intervention through SEN Support and EHC plans will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to music.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning music. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a musical festival at another school, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

Teachers assess children's work in music by making informal judgements as they observe and record them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks/reviews the work and comments as necessary. At the end of a unit of work, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum level of attainment and records these grades on Sims. We use this as the basis for assessing the progress of the child and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

The music subject leader keeps samples of children's work in various forms, which she uses to demonstrate the expected level of achievement in music for each age group in the school.

When the peripatetic tutors feel they are ready, the pupils get the opportunity to sit external accredited exams. If successful the pupils are awarded a Graded Examination Certification with either a pass, merit or distinction.

Resources

We provide a wide range of musical instruments to ensure that our pupils are equipped with the resources required to progress through the curriculum. We keep resources for music stored in accessible centralised areas at the school. Our library contains a combination of music books and resources and we have computer software to support children's individual research and composition work.

Monitoring and review

The music subject leader is responsible for the standard of children's work and for the quality of teaching in music. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of music, being informed about current developments in the subject and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The music subject leader is responsible for giving the Head of School an annual summary report in which she/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.

Repertoire

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Y1	<u>Classical</u> 'Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens	<u>Classical/Romantic</u> '5th Symphony' by Beethoven	<u>Spanish</u> La Resonante Basuband
Y2	<u>Ghanian</u> West African Drumming – Mamady Keita	<u>Romantic</u> 'The Nutcracker' by Tchaikovsky	<u>Folk</u> British Isles
Y3	<u>Popular</u> Jazz Blues Rock 'n' Roll	<u>20th Century</u> 'A Short Ride in a Fast Machine' by John Adams	<u>Early</u> Medieval Music
Y4	<u>Choral</u> Gregorian Chant - present day	<u>21st Century</u> 'Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra' by Gabriel Prokofiev	<u>Samba</u> 'O Ye Coma Va' by Tito Puente
Y5	<u>Dance</u> Hornpipe Calypso Waltz Hip hop	<u>Baroque</u> 'Tocatta and Fugue in D minor' by J.S. Bach	<u>Popular</u> Pop Music 70s – present day
Y6	<u>Popular</u> Film Music	<u>Indian Classical</u> 'Symphony' by Ravi Shankar	<u>21st Century</u> 'Connect It' by Anna Meredith