

MANCHESTER COMMUNICATION PRIMARY ACADEMY

INTENT AND SEQUENCING

Performing Arts Page Profile

Curriculum



PERFORMING ARTS AT MCPA

Intent

At Manchester Communication Primary Academy (MCPA) we believe that high-quality Performing Arts provision will inspire children to think innovatively and develop their innate creativity and curiosity in a way that is inclusive to every child.

We believe that as the children progress in their learning, they should be able to think critically and creatively, developing an in-depth understanding of the Performing Arts. We believe that children should know and understand how music and drama reflect and shape our history, and how these arts contribute to the future and creativity of society and the world around us.

Through the study of specific drama techniques and music, teaching staff are able to make tangible links between the Performing Arts and the wider curriculum; our curriculum ensures a broad range of skills are taught and can be accessed, used and developed in other lessons – for example, drama is a key form through which a lot of history can be understood.

Within drama and music, children are expected to be reflective practitioners, constantly evaluating and improving their work in order to keep moving forward in their learning and perform to the best of their ability. We strive for this to be a meaningful and continuous process, that is increasingly pupil-led further up in the school and that evidences developmental-related verbal and written reflection. Our curriculum introduces and teaches key skills at appropriate ages, in ways that encourage pupils to explore their own creativity and perspective on the world. By creating a safe and nurturing environment, pupils are encouraged to take creative risks and to learn from their creative journey, rather than focus entirely on an end destination or final 'product'.

Here at MCPA we recognise that the Performing Arts stimulate creativity and imagination; they provide visual, tactile and sensory experiences and a unique way of understanding, and responding to, the world.

Implementation

Our Performing Arts curriculum, encompassing drama and music, is delivered as distinct subjects with a clear sequence of lessons incorporating clear links throughout the school and ensuring learning is deep and transferable year on year.

The planned curriculum delivers a split of 2 half-terms drama to 4 half-terms music. These half-terms are planned with each topic for each year group in mind, matching up relevant topics to drama or music modules.

In order to secure progression, and drive high quality products and work, children will focus on various areas of drama and music. These key elements include characterisation, developing skills such as facial expression, tone of voice, gesture, gait, posture. Within music we ensure that the children build on their key skills and knowledge surrounding pulse, rhythm, genre of music, revisiting these skills and becoming more adept at discussing them year on year.

We also continuously discuss and secure knowledge, in each year group, surrounding the history of music, from the renaissance period all the way to contemporary. The children are exposed to all styles of music and, as they become more accustomed to them, they can confidently identify the period of time different music belongs to.

In certain year groups, aspects of musical composition and drama are linked - such as in Year 3's 'Romans in Britain' drama topic, or Year 6's 'Wartime in Britain'. These incorporate both our drama curriculum and also improvisational/compositional skills within music.

We currently use Charanga Music School (<https://www.myhubdigital.org.uk/site/>) to deliver a high quality music education to our children and ensure curriculum coverage and progression.

The curriculum also allows for trips and visits that will also further enhance the children's learning experiences.

Pupils creative work can be played to them, shared on social media, and celebrated within their classes and with the whole school to ensure that the performing arts are given a high status within the school. This includes the school's annual 'CollaboART' which enables further focus on the children's creative, artistic and teamwork skills whilst also developing their knowledge.

The teaching and implementation of MCPA's performing arts curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and provides a well-structured approach to the study of drama and music.

Staff subject knowledge is supported by our Performing Arts lead and links to MCA (our partner high school).

Impact

Through our Performing Arts curriculum, we strive to create a supportive and collaborative ethos for learning by providing investigative and creative learning opportunities. Emphasis is placed on collaborative exploratory learning to support children in developing coherent knowledge and understanding of each unit of work covered.

Our curriculum is of high quality, is well thought out and structured to demonstrate progression. Displays around the school, as well as celebration of skills online, reflect the children's sense of pride in their work and is also demonstrated by creative outcomes across the wider curriculum. We focus on progression of knowledge and skills with discreet vocabulary progression contributing to subject specific development.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Assessing children's understanding and ability of topic linked vocabulary before and after the unit is taught.
- Assessment of pupil discussion about their learning.
- Images and videos of the children's practical learning.
- Interviewing and conducting surveys for the pupils to reflect on their learning.
- Annual reporting of standards across the curriculum.
- Annual curriculum review and update.

Research

Performing Arts education for children is of fundamental importance. However, due to curriculum pressure, these subjects can often be marginalised in order to meet the increasing demands of English and Maths education. This is especially apparent after this year (2020 – 2021) and the current rhetoric surrounding 'catch up' within schools.

However, it can be argued that it is because of this year that the arts have become more important than ever before and curriculum time for these subjects should be protected.

One compelling argument can be heard from Susan Aykin, the National Lead for Visual and Performing Arts for Ofsted. She states, 'It's [...] important in [helping] them to access other areas of the curriculum [...] helps to consider and question the interpretive choices [...] that musicians might make in composition, or the playing of an instrument [...] it's vitally important in creating a rounded human being.'

It is widely recognised that teaching creative subjects, such as drama and music, teaches and develops skills other subjects do not. Skills which can then be utilised in all areas of life and learning. Eisner (2002) argues that there are five cognitive functions that 'the arts' gives us: the opportunity to really notice the world around us; the chance to engage our imagination by 'liberating us from the literal'; an ability to 'tolerate ambiguity' and promote subjectivity; a chance to inspect our own ideas as art is created; and the opportunity to 'discover our emotional selves'. It is through this that children can really start to discover their place in the world.

Whilst learning the performing arts is unarguably beneficial for individual development and cross-curricular skills, it is also important to consider the following quote from <https://clpe.org.uk/blog/2018/why-drama-essential-todays-classrooms>: 'The arts are a fundamentally important part of culture, and an education without them is an impoverished education leading to an impoverished society. Studying the arts should not have to be justified in terms of anything else... they are time-honored ways of learning, knowing, and expressing.'

Children should be taught to value these methods of expressing themselves and see them as equally important to any other subject. This is what we strive to achieve – to enable children to appreciate the Performing Arts for what they are and develop practical skills that they can take with them through life.