

Gastrells Community Primary School

Singing Strategy

(see also Music Policy)

June 2024

Review March 2027

Singing Strategy

This strategy document should be read alongside the school's Music Policy.

The purpose of the Singing Strategy is to outline singing activities at Gastrells, and to set out a strategy for the promotion of singing as an integral part of the broad and balanced curriculum offered at our school. This strategy also sets out how singing is valued and developed at Gastrells, with the central aim to ensure that as many children as possible are singing as often as possible. Our school has a strong ethos of inclusivity, where all children are encouraged to engage in singing as a vital part of their personal development and educational journey. Through opportunities for performance and collective singing, children at Gastrells develop self-confidence and an appreciation of the value of artistic communication. Children learn to evaluate, develop and improve their singing, to appreciate its cultural significance, whilst also experiencing the pure enjoyment of singing as an integral part of the life of the school community.

Singing in the Music Curriculum

Singing is key component of the music curriculum at Gastrells. Teachers use the Charanga Music Scheme of Work, published by Make Music Gloucestershire, to plan lessons (<https://www.makemusicgloucestershirecharanga.org.uk/scheme>). Charanga lesson planning is based around the learning of a central song, which provides a theme to a six week unit of work, with singing as a core activity in all music lessons. The scheme encompasses songs from a wide range of cultural sources, styles and genres. Through evaluating and performing of a range of songs, alongside progressive singing activities, such as singing games and improvisation, children learn to control their voices, and understand the inter-related dimensions of music: pitch, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and musical notation.

The Charanga Scheme of Work provides all plans, activities and resources for the delivery of the Music Curriculum for an academic year for each year group from EYFS to Year 6. The implementation of the curriculum through the Scheme of Work ensures balanced coverage and progressive learning that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum requirements for Music. Charanga offers teachers flexibility to link units of work in Music to topics in other subjects, and also to adapt activities for singing a range of vocal styles and genre. Charanga also provides those teachers who may not be confident singers a comprehensive framework of resources and supporting materials to enable them to explore, analyse, create, compose and perform songs with children using their voices.

Class Play Productions

At Gastrells, every pupil in every year group, from Reception to Year 6, appears on stage to participate in a musical drama performance with their class during every academic year over the course of their time at the school. These class play productions, which are performed before the whole school, and then also to parents and families at after school performances, include music and singing, often with opportunities for solo singing performances. These productions give our children memorable experiences of singing before a large audience with a real stage, costumes, props and backdrops, and using singing in a meaningful way to convey narrative. Children overcome the initially daunting challenge of performing on stage and singing to an audience from their very earliest start at Gastrells, and are encouraged and motivated to continually build on their confidence as performers and singers as they progress through the school.

Singing Assemblies

Collective singing is a part of all assembly activities. Pupils enter the hall for assembly to join in with singing, and also sing as they leave the hall from assembly. The school uses songs from non-denominational resources, with supporting powerpoint lyrics, which reflect seasonal themes and cultural festivals throughout the year. The songs are lively and engaging, and popular with all ages of children. Pupils generally attend whole school assemblies on two afternoons each week. Alongside these whole school assemblies, there are also discrete Singing Assemblies for all pupils in Key Stage 1 and for Key Stage 2. These weekly Singing Assemblies involve a 30 minute session of collective singing. This provides opportunity for children to learn and rehearse songs for Young Voices, Carol Concerts and other school events (as outlined below), as well as opportunity to learn new songs for assembly.

Christmas Carol Concerts

Christmas Carol Concerts are a longstanding tradition at the school, and provide a focus for singing activities in the Autumn Term. Children learn a selection of songs on the themes of Christmas and Winter, which are performed in a Christmas Carol Concert for parents and families at the end of term. The Key Stage 2 Carol Concert has traditionally taken place as an evening performance at Rodborough Tabernacle. Alongside the collective singing, concerts feature a song performed by each individual class in turn, and there is often a song in which the audience is also invited to join in. Concerts have previously also featured solo performances by individual pupils. The school also has an additional traditional event 'Carols around the Tree'. This involves children collectively singing seasonal songs around the school Christmas Tree, either in the hall or in the school grounds.

Young Voices

Young Voices is a national singing event for schools held annually in an arena venue in the UK. With 8,000 children singing together, it is the largest children's choir concert in the world. At Gastrells, all pupils learn songs for Young Voices and have the opportunity to attend the concert during their time in upper key stage 2. Children have the experience of a unique communal singing event in a national arena, performing to a capacity audience, alongside famous artists. Young Voices provides online resources and activities each year for classes to learn a set of songs chosen especially for each concert, encompassing a wide range of music styles, providing an engaging and varied educational experience. Children at Gastrells develop their singing ability through rehearsing the songs, evaluating and developing their performance as a group in preparation for the event. Through this social experience of collective singing and performance, Young Voices provides an additional opportunity to develop communication skills and personal confidence.