

Musical Education at The Cavendish School

"Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them - a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement. "

Gerald R. Ford

Music is an essential part of being human. Listening to it, reacting to it, performing it, all enhance our individual and collective lives and bring joy and pleasure. We do not have to be 'good' at music, but for our physical and mental well-being and health we need to engage with and in it.

This may be singing in or out of tune, quietly to ourselves or belting it out for others. It may be listening to and enjoying music from around the world and across many genres, either privately with our ear-buds in or collectively at a stadium concert. It may be playing an instrument that we want to play on our own, in a private rehearsal room for our own pleasure or satisfaction, or it may be playing in concert with others in a band or more traditional orchestra for the and enjoyment of other. It does not matter how we engage with Music as long as we do engage with it, because Music makes us better, happier people, emotionally and psychologically.

Developing Key Skills and Knowledge through Participation in Musical Education

From our earliest days we make music through sounds and what we 'sing'. These sounds and 'songs' may make no sense to anyone except ourselves but we know that when we do it, we feel better.

Scientifically it is well documented that singing, the one form of music that almost everyone can take part in, enhances our sense of wellbeing. It alters hormonal levels, stimulates neurotransmitters that boost our mood and our immune systems. It can help to relieve feelings of stress and anxiety by enabling us to 'lose' ourselves in the sound. As our experience of music develops and widens similar effects are felt as we engage with the music that makes us feel good. Several important life-long skills are also supported through music education. Engaging with and, ideally, making music, is a positive way to communicate with others and express yourself creatively. The way each individual approaches and interprets their music is unique to them. By making choices about what we play or listen to we are expressing our individuality and creativity in a positive and non-threatening way.

When engaging in music with others it is essential that we collaborate and listen to them as well as focus on our own performance. We have to listen to what others are doing or 'saying' and respond to this, key skills in the development of relationships and in social situations.

For those young people who do go on to play an instrument, perseverance, patience and resilience become key skills to develop in order to make progress. If they become part of an ensemble, be that a rock band a choir or an orchestra, interpersonal skills of collaboration, compromise, empathy and understanding of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses and making allowances for these will be essential to the survival of the group.

For young people with ASD, many of whom have sensory challenges around sound, 'Music' can be a divisive and difficult aspect of the school curriculum. We believe that everyone, regardless of their sensory needs and difficulties can enjoy music and sound in some way. It is our role to find out what aspect of music each individual can engage in and enjoy and respect and foster this. It is not about learning to play an instrument or singing in a choir. It may be for some and for those individuals we have a responsibility to nurture and enable this interest or talent. For all, it is about providing a wide range of opportunities to sample and respond to different musical experiences and once engaged in some form of music making or experience, to encourage and develop this by widening horizons.

School priorities and vision

The school's vision is "enabling the self", and the attributes of the IB Learner Profile, as developed in all subjects, are at the heart of this.



At the end of their school journey, our pupils will be:

- **Knowledgeable** about the understanding of musical history, reading music and instruments
- **Reflective** on the impact that different music has on listeners and how this may affect emotions and mental health
- **Moral** respecting others taste in music, considering the political and cultural impact of music.
- Able to **celebrate difference** in music tastes, different sensory differences for neuro diversity.
- **Thinking** the impact of music on self and others
- **Caring** towards other people and their experiences. Understanding that music can trigger emotions and memories.
- Able to **communicate** their ideas effectively, presenting compositions which reflect the composer. Able to sensitively communicate preference for type of music
- Able to give a **balanced** view on a debate taking into account evidence and preferred genres.
- Exploration of self and mediums of music to create an **inquiry** into the art form.
- **Courageous** in attempting something new, knowing that learning involves exploring self, making mistakes and being open to new musical experiences.