

Year 4, Unit 6 Overview

How Does Music Connect Us with the Environment?

Purpose, Identity and Expression in Music

Introduction

In each unit, children are asked a question, intended as an entry point for exploring one of six broad **Social Themes**. These six themes are overlapping.

The exploration of each theme accompanies them on their musical journey throughout this Scheme, and hopefully beyond! As the learners grow, the questions and entry points for the Social Themes evolve. All the while, they are encouraged to be responsible and kind citizens of the world and constructive but critical thinkers. The unit question can be discussed throughout each unit up to and including the final unit performance.

Musically, students are constantly touching upon all key musical elements and skills, building upon these as they progress through each lesson, unit and year. As well as this, there is also a **Musical Spotlight** to each unit. This by no means indicates that there is only one musical aspect or concept being considered and developed – it just allows one chosen musical element, aspect or skill to come to the fore for contemplation, discussion and development, for the duration of that unit.

Unit 6 Social Theme:

In this unit, we ask '**How Does Music Connect Us with the Environment?**' as an entry point for the broad Social Theme of '**Music Is a Nature Lover and Guardian of the Earth**'. This is relevant to learning topics such as nature, environment, animals, geography, biology, art, outdoor education, the Forest School, climate change, environmental justice and other topics as you, the teacher, see fit.

More detail on this Social Theme and how it might be explored in the classroom can be found in the Social Themes Overview document, where you can find more description on:

- How music is a very natural aspect of humanity. As described in the texts introducing the other Social Themes of our curriculum, music is a primordial ancient characteristic of what it means to be human. Music is a natural phenomenon – it comes from nature: a natural resource!
- How, physically, all our instruments have come from the resources we have around us. The sound of musical instruments is the sound of human creativity manipulating and engaging with the materials and properties of the world around it.

- How, throughout the ages, musicians and music often copy or are inspired by the natural sounds around us.
- How nature can be considered as having other ‘musics’ (not just human music). Birdsong is one example. Recent research has shown that being able to hear and recognise more than around 20 bird calls is equivalent to a significant increase in salary, in terms of the increased sense of wellbeing it delivers. People are increasingly recognising the value of these other ‘musics’.
- How music can play an active role in protecting our planet, either directly (eg in calling for change through song lyrics) or indirectly (eg in encouraging a love of nature by using instruments to copy natural sounds in a musical composition).
- How music, particularly the music industry, has some challenges to face itself, in terms of its own environmental and social impact. For example, streaming music has been shown to be at times the most environmentally damaging form of listening to music.

Social Theme: Cross-Curricular Links and Further Exploration and Inquiry

The descriptions above – on music and its relationship to nature and the earth – are intended to give teachers some ideas and direction as to potential cross-curricular opportunities and avenues for further thematic exploration beyond the songs, music and content encountered in this unit. Just as music is all-pervasive in society and our daily lives, we hope you find ways to tie it into all your learning, beyond the purely musical education offered by our curriculum.

The six Social Themes of the Charanga curriculum are all overlapping, but Unit 6 might overlap particularly well with discussions and learning at other times in the year during **Unit 3: How Does Music Improve Our World? (Music Is a Changemaker)**.

Unit 6 Musical Spotlight:

In this unit, the Musical Spotlight is **‘Purpose, Identity and Expression in Music’**. You will continue to learn about all the Foundational Elements of Music with a focus on the **intentions behind musical expression and their relationship with identity**, while working implicitly with all the other elements of music as you go through the steps of the unit.

Why do we make music? Music making and listening are very natural, human processes, even often an urge, and this is especially true for certain people and communities. That being said, it is not all completely spontaneous and even the most ‘free’ improvisation has some kind of thinking, intention, purpose or identity behind it if we look and listen more closely.

In Unit 5, we saw how intimately music is linked to our feelings, and how it can be linked with any kind of occasion or emotion. Because of this, like all the arts in their own way, musical creation can arise from or for any occasion, any moment, any feeling. At the same time, we have learnt about how music is culturally variable, and the music some people might associate

with one feeling or occasion might not be appropriate for other people or cultures with regard to a similar occasion or feeling. For one of many examples, think of funerals. Some people or cultures might choose to have very slow, sombre, sad music playing at the funeral of a loved one, to express the grief of loss. Others might choose completely the opposite: lively, energetic, fast-paced music to celebrate their life in an upbeat way. Such differences can be personal, cultural or both.

Music can be made for all sorts of reasons: celebrations and ceremonies, creating feelings of unity (eg national anthems, sports team songs), to express love or other feelings towards another person, for worship, for dancing, for advertising or film, as political propaganda or protest – the list goes on and on.

Consider the above when listening and responding, singing, creating and performing.

Further Exploration

This can be a fruitful area of discussion for the classroom. One starting point could be a class brainstorming session, discussing ‘What are the different uses for music and/or the reasons for making it?’ This might lead into students volunteering information on the different home cultures and backgrounds they have, and how that relates to different musical styles and choices.

It can also be productive to ask each individual for what purpose they would like to make music. Sometimes people don’t quite know how to express their reasons for wanting to make music in words – but they know they want to!

Connections Between the Musical Spotlight and the Social Theme

How does this connect to the Social Theme of this Unit? One interesting way to engage with this question can be to compare why other animals make sounds, particularly those sounds we find most musical, such as the singing of songbirds. Why does a robin or blackbird sing? Is there one reason or several? Can we ever know for sure? Do you think there is always a real purpose, or is it possible the birds sing simply because it makes them feel good? Such questions can lead down all sorts of avenues for inquiry, way beyond the realms of music!

Song-Centred Entry Points of Learning

The entry point for both the Musical Spotlight and Social Theme of each unit is a collection of new weekly songs. The songs are the heart of each lesson's learning. The Musical Spotlight is ‘lived and breathed’ through the musical resources and activities; the Social Theme is provoked by a question which teachers can use to venture into lively inquiry, discussion, debate and learning, and also to link to any cross-thematic or cross-curricular educational opportunities that might arise.

Lessons and Learning in a Spiral Curriculum

As lessons progress through the units and year groups, the key learning is repeated, musical skills are reinforced and the learning deepens. Children quickly become familiar with the musical activities, through which they acquire new, or reinforce previous, musical knowledge and understanding.

To support intense and rapid learning, the musical activities are designed in one of two ways:

1. The activities can be a repeat of the previous week, in order to embed and rehearse key musical skills.
2. The activities can be a repeat of previous musical skills but have different content, in order to strengthen and apply previous musical learning.

As the children move through the Scheme, they acquire new knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding and application of previous learning. This spiral approach leads to deeper, more secure learning and musical mastery.

Differentiation

Music education is extremely relevant to multiple aspects of differentiation for learning.

This Scheme is developed with the express intention of supporting each educator to cater for the variety of individual learner-types as they normally would like to, but through a music education lens.

Throughout the Units of Work, you will find that the guidance, supporting documentation and structure of the lessons in the Charanga resources take care of many of the more musical details, while empowering you to think about and adapt to the needs of the students you are teaching. In most cases, these will be students you probably already know very well from a holistic, learning perspective. Therefore, with these supporting materials and your existing teaching skills, you should be able to deliver any Charanga music lesson in a way that caters appropriately for the diversity in your classroom.

More detail and guidance on differentiation in music education and in our curricula can be found in the **Curriculum Overview** documents.

Teaching the Lessons of This Unit

This six-week Unit of Work is aligned with the official National Curriculum for Music and the non-statutory Model Music Curriculum Guidance published by the DfE in 2021. It is clearly sequenced with high musical expectations that give all children the opportunity to learn about, enjoy and explore music.

It meets all the required standards, skills and knowledge needed for a full, holistic music education.

This unit sets out sequences of learning around a song in key musical areas which, over time, all contribute towards the steadily increasing development of musicianship:

- Listening
- Singing
- Playing
- Improvising and Composing
- Performing

Supporting Documentation for This Unit

Lesson Documentation:

1. A full lesson plan including:
 - The musical features to be learnt
 - A summary of each activity
 - A learning focus for each activity
 - Knowledge and skills for each activity

A brief lesson plan including:

- The lesson structure
- A learning focus for each activity

2. A Listen and Respond Guide for each lesson

Unit Documentation:

1. An Understanding Music Guide
2. Assessment documentation including:
 - Teacher Assessment
 - Knowledge Organisers
 - Music Passports

Year Documentation:

1. A Key Stage 2 Guide
2. Year 4 Musical Progression
3. Year 4 Theory Guide
4. Style Indicators
5. Glossary

The Unit Structure

Activity 1: Musicianship Options

Activity 2: Listening

Activity 3: Singing

Activity 4: Playing

Activity 5: Composing and Improvising

Activity 6: Performing

The Unit Structure Explained

- Steps 1–6 feature three different songs with connected musical activities.
- Steps 1, 3 and 5 include a Listen and Respond activity related to the song being learnt.
- Steps 2 and 4 include a different Listen and Respond activity for enrichment.
- Step 6 repeats one of the Listen and Respond activities for assessment purposes.
- Step 6 is an ‘Assessment Checkpoint’ week. Teachers have the option of delivering a standard music lesson or having the children complete some, or all, of the assessment tasks. Please refer to the **Assessment** documentation provided.

Activity Descriptions

Activity 1: Musicianship Options

As a class, complete the Understanding Music activity in each step. The musical learning in Understanding Music is central to each unit, so please use Improve Together as an optional activity for variation and enrichment.

Understanding Music

In KS2, this activity supports the children in their understanding of duration, pulse, rhythm and pitch. Over time, this activity introduces a range of notation, time signatures and key signatures. It is designed to bring everyone together at the beginning of the lesson to learn, embed or revisit the music theory required for the year. This activity is essential to the development of children's knowledge, but feel free to sometimes use the *Improvise Together* activity.

The musical content and progression of each Understanding Music activity can also be viewed in your **Understanding Music Guide**.

The Musical Features in the Understanding Music Activity for This Unit:

Tempo: 114 bpm (beats per minute = tempo)

Time signature: 4/4 (four crotchet beats in every bar)

Key signature: C major

Rhythmic patterns using: Minims, dotted crotchets, crotchets and quavers

Melodic patterns using: C, D, E, G and A

Improvise Together

This activity gives the children an opportunity to practise improvising together. There isn't an improvise activity connected to every song, so this can be used as an option. Here, they can practise their ideas together over a backing track. You can take it in turns to play when looping the track.

Time signature: 4/4 (four crotchet beats in every bar)

Key signature: A minor

The children can use the notes: A, B, C, D and E or A, B, C, D, E, F and G

Activity 2: Listening

Listen and Respond

In this Unit, the children will listen and respond to the following:

Step 1: You Can See It Through by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

Step 2: A Ceremony Of Carols by Benjamin Britten

Step 3: The Octopus Slide by Joanna Mangona and Brendan Reilly

Step 4: As above

Step 5: Connect by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

This content-rich, interactive activity explores the impact that music can have on us, its design and cultural place; contextualising the music your students will listen to. Accompanying each lesson plan is a **Listen and Respond Guide**, with all the research and information that is needed for the children to complete the tasks and activities you and they will see on-screen.

Each subsequent musical activity that follows Listen and Respond, reinforces the learning for musical knowledge and skills that culminate in a performance.

The Listen and Respond activity has four on-screen interactive tabs to work through:

1. Listen

Listen to the music together. Remember this is the first time the children will hear the music that is central to their learning for each lesson. Use the on-screen questions as a focus and discuss them together as a class before and after listening. This activity has been designed to explore the children's initial response to the music, how they might move, feelings and first impressions. As the children get older, this becomes an opportunity to consolidate previous learning, eg is it a style they have heard before, or is it an unusual time signature or groove?

2. Respond

It is important that the children respond in any way they feel comfortable. All responses are valid – musical and non-musical. The on-screen resource will focus on what is needed for that particular year.

Remember: each question has its own tile, don't click on the answer until the children have discussed the question. Use the discussion and the information from the tiles to learn about the particular features of the style of the song and its design.

3. Understand

This provides an opportunity for a class discussion about why the song was written and how the song connects to its social and cultural context. Use the discussion and the information from the tiles to learn about the background of the music or song. The 'Understand' tiles always have a key fact that is historical, a key fact that is cultural and a key fact that is cross-curricular. The 'Understand' tab facts will help the children connect the song to its cultural, historical and social context as appropriate.

4. Connect

The children will learn the style indicators of the song or music. Looking at the interactive musical timeline 'Connections: A Selection of Musical Styles and Their Origins' will help them to highlight the connections of the song/music to other styles and place it in time.

Activity 3: Singing

Learn to Sing the Song

You will have warmed up your voices in Understanding Music.

On the screen, you will have the option to break the song down into manageable learning sections. Add clapping and movement in the relevant sections and have fun!

There is an option to follow the score if you wish to see the notated version.

Unit 6 Songs to Be Learnt:

- **Song 1** – You Can See It Through by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor
- **Song 2** – The Octopus Slide by Joanna Mangona and Brendan Reilly
- **Song 3** – Connect by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

Activity 4: Playing

Play Your Instruments with the Song

Use the **Musical Progression** document for further guidance.

On the screen, you will see animated glockenspiels and recorders playing four differentiated parts. You decide with the children which parts are the most suitable for them. The sheet music is available, too. Some of these instrumental parts are challenging, but have been written so that every child has an opportunity to play. Their skills will build over time, so the children will probably swap between parts regularly.

Previously (in KS1), there has been a ‘sound before symbol’ approach. This approach is still an option, but show the children the notated parts as part of their learning. The **Music Theory Guide** and videos will support learning notation.

There are also four differentiated parts available for each band instrument; Part 1 is the harder part.

Instrumental parts are available for the following songs in this unit:

- **Step 1** – You Can See It Through by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

These are the notes you will be using on glockenspiel or recorder. There are four differentiated parts; Part 1 is the hardest (this colour denotes deeper learning):

Songs	Instrumental Notes			
	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
You Can See It Through (Glockenspiel) 4/4, D Minor, 130 bpm	C, D, E (Crotchets, quavers)	C, D, E (Crotchets, quavers)	D, E (Crotchets)	D (Crotchets)
(Recorder)	C, D, E (Crotchets, quavers)	A, G (Crotchets, quavers)	A, G (Crotchets)	A (Crotchets)

Activity 5: Composing and Improvising

Use the **Musical Progression** document for guidance.

Think about the differences between improvising and composing.

As you know, when someone improvises, they make up their own tune that has never been heard before. It is not written down and therefore will never be heard again. If you write your improvisation down in any way, it becomes a composition and you can play it again with your friends. The music comes from inside the performer and belongs to them; it's not a question of doing it 'right' or 'wrong'. If the activity is set up properly within correct musical boundaries, children can only succeed.

You will be using three or five notes, or sometimes even a full scale (see the relevant **Musical Progression** documents).

There is one song in this unit to compose with, plus additional opportunities for composition and improvisation in the **Improvise Together** and **Music Notepad** apps (this colour denotes deeper learning):

Songs	Improvising		Composing		
	3 notes	5 notes	3 notes	5 notes	7 notes
You Can See It Through 4/4, D Minor, 130 bpm	N/A	N/A	D, E, F	D, E, F, G, A	D, E, F, G, A, B ^b , C

Improvisation

In every unit, there is an opportunity for improvisation and for the children to express themselves. Each week, there is an option within 'Musicianship' to Improvise Together (see above) - as there is no Improvise with the Song activity in this unit, please use the Improvise Together app each week instead.

You can improvise all together, in groups or as a solo – you decide. As in KS1, the children can use their voices or clap (rhythmic improvisation) if they are unsure. Then, they can use one note and progress to two, three and five notes only when they are ready. Always start the improvisation with note one of the given sequence.

Composition

In every unit, there is an opportunity for composing and communicating the children's musical ideas and feelings.

- The composition could be a class task or an individual task.
- The composition could be presented on its own or as part of the performance of a unit song.

There is support in the **full lesson plans** as to how to approach these activities and you can watch an **accompanying video**.

There are two different composition options:

Option 1: Compose with the Song

In this activity, the children will create a melody. Choose the 'Compose with the Song' app in the lesson viewer and the notes provided to create a simple melody that will fit with the song. Choose from the differentiated note sets and as a whole class or in groups, compose a new, simple melody that will be played with the song in its performance.

Creating the Compositions – A Whole-Class Activity:

Compose the melody with one person on the whiteboard. Encourage all children to put forward their ideas. After the tune has been composed, children will learn to play it on their instruments, so keep it simple! You might want to split the class into groups for this activity if the children have access to iPads or computers.

Click 'play' on the composition screen and you will hear the backing track. Drag and drop the notes that you want to use in your composition. Note-names are written in the vertical column on the left-hand side.

Option 2: Music Notepad

Using the Music Notepad app, create your own compositions as a class or in differentiated groups. The lesson plans will give you the information you need for your class to complete this activity, if chosen.

The home screen of the app allows you to tailor the settings of your composition by selecting the time and key signatures, clef and number of bars. Once these have been selected, you are able to notate your own composition.

Activity 6: Performing

Perform with the Song

Perform and share the learning that has taken place in each lesson and at the end of the unit.

Here, you have the opportunity to share the fun you had in the lesson. You can sing and add any of the musical activities you have practised with the song/s. Create and present a holistic performance. This will be a short performance for sharing at the end of the lesson. As a class, you can perform at any time to an audience. You might decide to organise a special concert at a different time. Talk together with the children about each element of the lesson/s and what they would like to perform. Share thoughts and feelings.

All aspects of the musical learning in these units are connected. The children don't just sing a song, they learn all aspects of it – its historical connections, its narrative, theory, cultural context and style. They then learn and perform the song, with options for improvising, composing, playing their instruments and, of course, movement. Being part of a performance can mean organising, presenting and recording it. If possible, record the performance; children can watch it and use it as a basis for assessment. Children will learn to revisit a performance and reflect on it in greater depth. They will discuss, contextualise and refine their ideas, and look back on the progress they have made. Consider how the children might improve the performance and how they might react to feedback.

Recording your 'end of lesson' sharing can be part of the **formative assessment** process. You will have the option to revisit and perform a song/s of your choice in Step 6 as part of the **summative assessment** process. Talk about the progress that has been made.

Performing is and should be a wonderful and joyful experience for everyone. It is important for children to learn how to behave when performing and when they are part of an audience. Both are important and both have a history of custom and practice in different venues and for different occasions. For some, performing music will become a key part of musicianship. For everyone, regular performance experience and attention to basic performing etiquette enable children to become happy, confident performers, who also feel at ease participating as part of an audience for other performers.

Activity 7: Quiz (Step 6)

Theory Quiz (Step 6 only, end of each unit)

This theory quiz summarises all of the musical learning that has taken place in the unit. There is also a more summative, general quiz for the entire year at the end of Unit 6. Each quiz has a different number of questions and can be used to suit lesson pacing and scheduling appropriately. Each question is multiple-choice and allows you to select the correct answer before moving on.

End of Year Quiz (Unit 6, Step 6 only, end of each year)

This theory quiz summarises all of the musical learning that has taken place in the year. Each quiz has a different number of questions and can be used to suit lesson pacing and scheduling appropriately. Each question is multiple-choice and allows you to select the correct answer before moving on.

Unit Summary

Step	Activity 1: Musicianship Options	Activity 2: Listen and Respond	Activity 3: Singing	Activity 4: Playing	Activity 5: Improvising and Composing	Activity 6: Performing
1	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	You Can See It Through	You Can See It Through	Play instrumental parts	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
2	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	A Ceremony Of Carols	You Can See It Through	N/A	Options: - Compose with the Song	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
3	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	The Octopus Slide	The Octopus Slide	N/A	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
4	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	The Octopus Slide	The Octopus Slide	N/A	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
5	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	Connect	Connect	N/A	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
6	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together Option 3 Theory Quiz (End of Unit and End of Year)	A Ceremony Of Carols	Revisit a song of your choice	Play instrumental parts with your chosen song, if available	Option to revisit Improvise and Compose activities	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson and prepare for a concert