

Rationale

Learning about and through the arts is fundamental to an education that aspires to nurture and support the development of the whole person. Awareness of, involvement in, and appreciation of the arts enables students to encounter a rich world of creativity, imagination and innovation (Arts in Education Charter, 2012). The UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27) affirms the rights of everyone to 'participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts'.

Through engaging with music, students are offered opportunities to develop new skills, while drawing on their previous experiences. These previous experiences are often central to our existence as music is everywhere. From the moment we are born we are in a musical world. Music is a natural early connection between infant and caregivers. International research shows that from the very early months of a child's life there is a human propensity to respond and engage with music. With music, students can immerse themselves intellectually, emotionally, physically and kinaesthetically in the learning experience. Music performance and composition are collaborative and interpersonal activities, where social skills are developed through the sharing of ideas, skills, or instruments.

Music can provide an environment for the student where they are safe to explore, experiment and be allowed to take creative risks. The subject can engage students in learning that engages, inspires, challenges, provokes, exhilarates, and liberates. Students are encouraged to collaborate in the formation of ideas and the presentation of these ideas and to critically reflect on their work and the work of others. Through listening to the music of others, and assimilating this into their own ideas, students learn how musical works are created. Through understanding how to evaluate and critique the works of others, students learn to be self-reflective and improve on their own musical creations.

As a creative endeavour, music can facilitate the development of imaginative and exploratory experiences, where individuality and personality are provided with the opportunity to grow and be given a voice. The study of music offers lifelong opportunities to develop the imagination in unique ways, through listening to familiar and unfamiliar works, coming to know and understand sounds internally, creating sound pictures or stories and expressing feelings and emotions in sound.

Learning music is intrinsically motivating, meaningful and a rewarding activity for young people because it is hands-on; fully engaging the students in activities that relate to and have a connection with the world experienced by them outside the classroom. Music fosters both the specific skills related to the subject, and a range of transferable skills that may apply to other individual and collaborative endeavours. Through movement, sound, symbol and image, engaging with music can transform people's creative ideas into expressive works that communicate feelings, meanings and interpretations to a wider audience.

Music is important as a catalyst for building cultural capital within the individual student and the class collective. Through encountering and engaging with an array of music activities, we can ensure that we continue to develop future citizens that are culturally engaged, culturally aware and culturally connected. Being culturally aware heightens student understanding of both national and international cultural identities. With an increasingly diverse and pluralist population, this understanding of others through a cultural lens will encourage students to develop as responsible and ethical citizens.

Music is a source of understanding history, reflecting the social and cultural context and the era of its creation. Music can portray the cultural identity of a country, the mood of the people or the thoughts of the individuals who live there. Music education brings the young person to an awareness and appreciation of their own unique cultural environment and ethos. In engaging students with the rich background of their native musical traditions as well as other musical genres, music education contributes to the students' knowledge and understanding of others, their times, their cultures and traditions