

# DEEP DIVE:

Curriculum area: Music



**Belle Vue  
School**



**Cornfields  
School**

*'Improving life chances'*



# INTRODUCTION

In September 2019, Ofsted introduced changes to the inspection framework. They continued to report on all aspects of a school, as set out in section five of the Education Act 2005, but changed the judgement headings and introduced a 'quality of education' judgement.

The revised inspection methodology, which supports the education inspection framework, has combined aspects of the previous key judgements of 'teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes' to provide a more holistic view of standards, particularly focusing on the curriculum.

The new methodology also saw the introductions of 'deep dives', which involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact. The Ofsted deep dive is one of the key elements of the new Ofsted inspection framework's curriculum focus.

In any school, the primary focus must be the education pupils are receiving day to day in the classroom. In order to establish if what pupils are receiving in the class is a quality education, we must be clear on the purpose of what we are delivering.

We have therefore utilised the Ofsted 'deep dive' framework as a system to ensure we are focussed on the quality of education and are able to accurately direct resources to achieve an outstanding curriculum. Our staff have looked at the subjects we offer and our cohort of pupils. Our staff have reflected and asked the questions.

1. What is the intention of this programme of study? (Intent)  
Only when we can answer this question do we move on to the next question.
2. How should we best deliver this programme of study? (Implementation)  
Only when we can answer this question do we move on to the next question.
3. How will we know we have been successful? (Impact)

At the core of our deep-dive approach is to consider and evaluate how education flows from intention to implementation to impact within our school. Without doing this, it would be impossible to form a valid judgement on the quality of the education we provide. Moreover, in completing the deep dives, we are able to ask ourselves pertinent questions and are able to accurately identify areas for improvement, from which we are able to quickly respond to provide necessary improvements in the quality of the education we deliver.

In summary, the deep-dive approach adopted by Ofsted has been developed to allow for accurate assessments of the quality of education to be made. It has been seen that this assessment process is a highly effective tool and we have embraced this tool as a regular feature of our self-assessment process in considering the quality of education we offer.

# CURRICULUM AREA: MUSIC

## Intent

The music sequence of work aims to equip pupils with basic skills by developing their talents, interests, and passions - and promoting music as a fun and emotionally connected subject area. It intends to develop a pupil's interest and knowledge of all aspects of music including composing, maintaining and recognising rhythm and beat, as well as improving neurological functioning. Music education is important in schools and yet, it seems it is being offered less and less in many school systems. Unfortunately, many schools have begun to exclude music from their curriculums to make room for other subjects.

Through carefully planned and resourced lessons that develop the knowledge, skills and attributes, pupils will acquire a curiosity and excitement for music and understand the benefits it can bring to their lives. Many who attend our schools have specific needs and have suffered trauma. It is our intent that music will provide them with positive mental and well-being benefits. Music can stimulate emotional and aesthetic responses, develop creative, technical, social and vocational skills, improve expression, communication, confidence and self-esteem - and facilitate positive changes in behaviour and wellbeing.

## Implementation

The sequence of works at Cornfields and Belle Vue is intended to be taught as a series of topics. This is to enable pupils to build upon previous learning and to explore topics appropriate to their developmental ages. The units are designed to be delivered in a creative way, using many approaches such as group working, paired exercises, and solo work. Throughout the year, pupils will have opportunities to explore the construction of music as well as writing their own lyrics, performing to others and researching the history of music (including various genres). The activities should help pupils to build confidence, resilience and a common interest in music. All pupils will also be given the opportunity to learn to play a simple instrument and explore reading music.

## Impact

Music education is an extremely important subject for all pupils to learn and can lead to better brain development, increases in human connection and even stress relief. A study at Northwestern University found better neural processing in students who played a musical instrument when they were compared with students who simply listened to music. This study shows the importance of receiving music education, rather than simply turning on background music when pupils are doing work in other subjects.

Cornfields and Belle Vue's sequence of work provides an effective curriculum that will give pupils a way to connect with other people. Children are naturally very social and it is important to encourage them to build relationships by providing them with experiences to share with each other. Not only will music education allow pupils to develop their musical skills, but it will also give them the opportunity to work on their maths, reading and writing skills, too.

# IN SUMMARY

The core purpose of our schools is to 'improve the life chances of children'. In short - we aim to reverse and eradicate the known correlation between poor outcomes in life - and factors that have made pupils vulnerable to underachievement at school. We achieve this by going above and beyond, setting high expectations and improving outcomes by working together with others.

We have a clear and compelling vision about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Our school ethos and curriculum are firmly embedded with a belief that we can powerfully address social disadvantage.

We are clear about the end points the curriculum is building towards - and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach those end points. Our school curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught previously.

Ofsted has outlined that schools who take a radical approach to the curriculum - with effective sequencing, structure and implementation - will be assessed favourably. We welcome this autonomy and believe that the curriculum needs to be radically reviewed, as doing more of the same will result in the status quo of underperformance of disadvantaged groups being the norm.

A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to pupils learning more and - and therefore achieving positive results. We aim to ensure that all of our pupils acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.