

Case study:

Ashton Keynes Primary School

Embedding diversity across the curriculum through music

Ashton Keynes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a one-form entry local authority primary school in the village of Ashton Keynes in north Wiltshire. The Music Subject Lead is Sandra Crowley, a music specialist who is also the EYFS Lead, KS1 Lead, and Year R teacher.

The headteacher, Samantha Saville, wanted to examine and embed equity, diversity and inclusion across all subject areas as a whole-school initiative, and felt that music would be a good place to start. This case study outlines the journey that the school went on in the academic year 2022–23.

First steps

Sandra began the process by brainstorming her thoughts on what aspects of music provision could potentially be examined and developed. She created a list of initial ideas which included:

- Auditing the songs sung in singing assemblies in terms of the range of styles/cultures represented
- Inviting live musicians from the wider community to perform in school
- Looking at the gender balance of pupils having peripatetic lessons
- Using pupil leaders, pupil voice and parent voice to gather feedback on music and the different cultures represented among pupils and their families
- Leading an inclusive cultural event for the community

The North Wiltshire Cluster Coordinator for Wiltshire Music Connect, Julia Falaki, suggested some audit tools to use: the Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit produced by South West London Music Services and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool produced by Youth Music. These helped to identify what the school was already doing well, including:

- Inclusive instrument lessons for all in Years 2, 3 and 4
- A variety of instrumental tuition
- Curriculum music taught using Charanga
- Weekly whole-school singing assemblies
- A school policy on how music notation is taught
- Good community links
- Active involvement in the Wiltshire Music Connect cluster



Action plan

The EDI audits produced some next steps, which Sandra then developed into an action plan. This included:

- Increasing the diversity of repertoire in singing assemblies
 - Introducing more gender-balanced instrumental tuition
 - Celebrating different cultures within the school community
 - Providing opportunities for diverse live musicians to work with pupils
 - Extending pupil leadership and pupil and parent voice
 - Ensuring that all pupils learn an instrument, read music and receive a diverse diet of music
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Some achievements from academic year 2022–23 are highlighted below:

Curriculum

Singing assemblies were redesigned to include a more diverse range of music – both sung and listened to. Sandra started to use the singing assembly as a way of reinforcing curriculum learning by focusing on different dimensions of music each term, and ensured that featured performers and composers represented a range of backgrounds, including different genders and disabled musicians.

A ‘Class Composer’ initiative was instigated, where every class was given a composer to research at the start of the school year. This composer was then revisited throughout the year in the class’s music lessons, as well as the whole school being exposed to all the class composers in singing assembly during the first term.

Instrumental Tuition and Ensembles

Sandra spoke to the peripatetic instrumental teachers and identified some areas of gender imbalance: all pupils learning drum-kit were boys, most pupils learning guitar were boys, and most pupils learning piano were girls. Sandra has begun to change this through better representation of different genders of musicians in singing assemblies and live music performances; there are now some girls learning drum-kit.

The school choir was also made up of more girls than boys, but Sandra addressed this by deliberately choosing repertoire that appeals to boys in singing assemblies, increasing their enjoyment and leading to more boys wanting to join the choir. Sandra ensured that performance opportunities for the choir would attract both boys and girls, such as Young Voices, which helped to draw in lots of new singers.



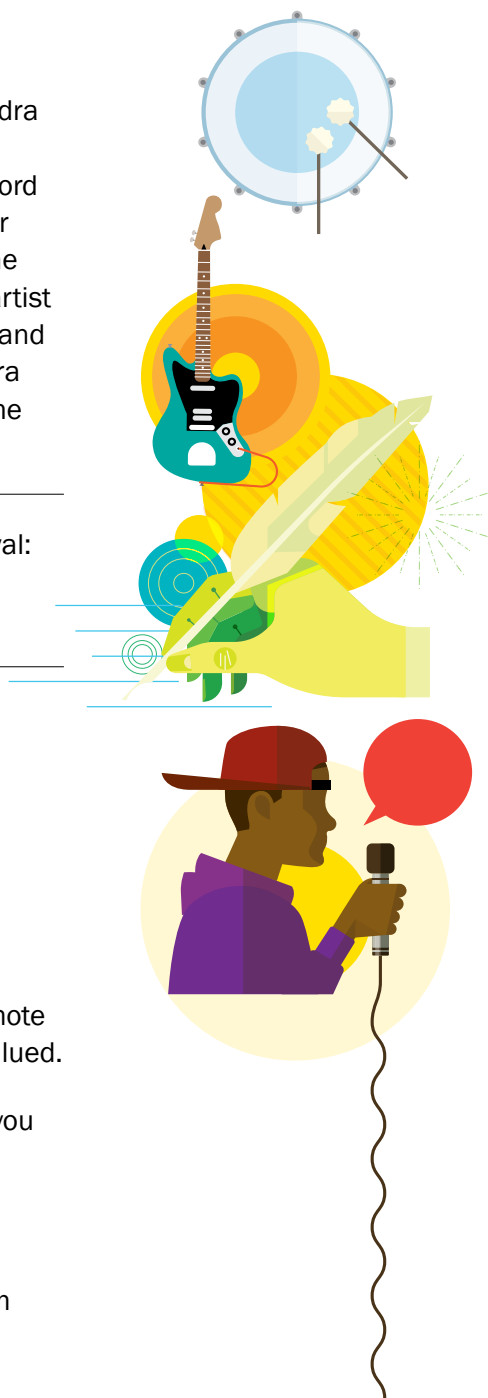
Live Music Opportunities

Using parents of pupils and other contacts in the local community, Sandra was able to bring in a diverse range of musicians to perform and lead workshops for pupils. Visits from the songwriter and producer Josh Record and the rap artist Ad_Apt inspired Year 5 and 6 to write and record their own raps based upon the school's vision, 'Shine bright and reach for the stars', which were then released on Spotify. Visits from Kenyan music artist Zangi and musicians from Womad exposed pupils to a variety of styles and traditions. Pupils learnt about opera by enjoying a performance by Opera Magic as part of the Wiltshire Music Connect Activity Fund Project for the North Wiltshire Music Cluster.

The end of the academic year saw the school host the first Shine Festival: a community event that brought pupils past and present and local musicians together in a joyful celebration of music.

What can other schools take away from this case study?

- Using an audit toolkit can help you to assess your current provision and identify what you could do to better embed EDI within music in your school.
- Choosing repertoire from a wide range of cultures and traditions in music lessons, assemblies, and the wider life of the school can promote diversity, respect, and a culture where all music is celebrated and valued.
- Using the musical skills of parents and community groups can help you to offer pupils a more diverse range of live music experiences.
- Showcasing performers from a diverse range of backgrounds (e.g. in terms of gender, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, disability and ethnicity), both in live performances and in videos or other classroom resources, can challenge stereotypes and show pupils that music is for everyone.



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