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Real Stories of Success in Music Education

Composing as a core Element of the Primary Music Curriculum

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich

Welcome to our MusicFirst Lighthouse series
Inspiring success stories in the real world capturing examples of how institutions have implemented online learning into their curriculum using innovative technology and creative thinking.

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The Context

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a state primary school which aims to give all children the best opportunities within the Catholic community.

Spearheaded by Music-lead Julie Dyer, the school has been exploring innovative ways to integrate music technology into its curriculum. Julie has adopted a collaborative approach, working alongside the computer-lead to create a dynamic learning environment with the goal of developing students composition skills.

Music Technology Implementation

Role

Julie Dyer works throughout the school, ensuring music technology is engrained in the teaching and learning environment and accessible to all students.

Resources

Chromebooks, headphones, headphone splitters, and new keyboards.

Why music technology is important

The integration of music technology is crucial as it empowers students to explore their talents. According to Julie Dyer, "it makes them feel like they are really talented". This sentiment is echoed by the students themselves, who express how the technology makes them feel like genuine musicians, composers, and even DJs. The school aims to instil confidence in students by showing them that composing is accessible to everyone.

Software solution

Julie has been using **OGenPlus** since it was released in May 2024, having previously used its predecessor **O-Generator**. The new **OGenPlus** had an immediate impact on the students' engagement in music. The unique wheel design along with a brand new music grid allows students to seamlessly arrange, record, and export compositions with the Clip Arranger.

OGEN+

OGenPlus

- User-friendly interface
- Engaging learning platform
- Aligned with curriculum standards
- Includes immersive video lessons
- Promotes creativity and music exploration

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Student Perspectives

OGenPlus is the main creative software tool used to integrate music technology into the music curriculum. Students have shared positive feedback on their experiences:

OGEN+

"It makes me feel like I own my music and am in charge of what I'm composing."

"Everyone is a composer"

"It makes me feel like I am a proper musician."

"I want to be a DJ when I leave school. This makes me feel like I am a DJ."

"I can express my emotions through music with technology."

"It makes me feel like I'm really important and a real composer."

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Teacher Insights

Julie Dyer appreciates how **OGenPlus** accommodates varying skill levels, making music technology accessible to all students:

"

A student can be really competent but not great at the tech side of it. But what the children like, and I like too, is that you can keep it simple and build up to it. So, even if you use one basic layer, you can go back to the lesson, learn, and build up your skills from there. There is something for everyone."

This iterative learning process reinforces musical concepts and encourages students to continually improve their compositions.

Julie goes on to emphasise the program's accessibility and potential for early adoption in the curriculum, suggesting that starting from Year 3 is beneficial. This early introduction would ensure all students, regardless of their background in music, could engage with and benefit from music technology. Unlike many Primary schools Julie teaches all the music through the school so can see the continuity through the year groups.

Experimentation and creativity

Key Stages 1 & 2

Students experiment with various sounds and instruments and explore rhythm, melody, and dynamics, creating their compositions through guided activities. They work on composing tasks as individuals and group collaboration, fostering communication and teamwork skills.

School and home use

The school utilises Google Classroom to extend learning beyond the classroom. Julie sends messages and links to online work, allowing students to continue their music technology education at home. This approach ensures continuous learning and skill development and she is able to provide further support to them.

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Summary

The adoption of music technology driven by the use of OGenPlus at St Mary's Primary School, showcases the transformative potential of integrating technology into the music curriculum.

Despite the technology challenges that exist such as Chromebook availability and functionality, they have leveraged the existing resources effectively, providing a platform for students to discover and develop their musical skills, preparing them for future opportunities in the digital world.

Contact Us

For further information about MusicFirst or how your school can become a Lighthouse Institution contact us today.

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