

# Ocarina Music Curriculum

## a modular approach to music teaching

*Delivering MUSIC with Ocarinas*

*Includes reference to  
National Curriculum in England  
Programmes of Study  
Key stages 1, 2, and 3*

*Suitable for ages 5 to 14  
in any Music Curriculum*

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# Ocarina Music Curriculum: a modular approach to music learning

## National Curriculum in England – Purpose of Study

"Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. A high-quality music education should engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and so increase their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they should develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon."

## National Curriculum in England – Aims

"The national curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils:

- perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians
- learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations."

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**Singing plus playing instruments are two key elements in any music curriculum.** Everyone has a voice; tuned musical instruments come in all shapes and sizes. This document aims to clarify the place of Ocarina-playing within any music curriculum and demonstrate the Ocarina's effective use in whole-class music. Whilst referring specifically to statutory English National Curriculum programmes of study, this document is relevant for music teachers everywhere.

**English Ocarinas** are relatively new instruments. Evolving over 40,000 years from bone- and vessel-flutes, the modern English Ocarina is made in the UK, using cutting-edge technology, to maximise pupils' success in class music. Ocarinas have been played in schools since 1983 using bespoke all-age music books that immerse the player in the music of different eras and cultures, with a surprisingly extensive repertoire for 21st century learning.

**The first discovery any teacher makes when using Ocarinas is their practicality.** By wearing Ocarinas, pupils can swap seamlessly between listening, singing and playing. Entire lessons can focus on pupils making music rather than getting instruments out of cases, putting them together, tuning them, and putting them down again every time they are not being played. **Wearing the Ocarina maintains instrumental-readiness throughout.**

**Playing Ocarinas has engaged and inspired generations of pupils to love music.** This is because Ocarinas are...

- inclusive – everyone can join in
- intuitive – children and teachers know what to do
- inexpensive – schools and parents can afford them
- impressive – children can play full-octave tunes straight away
- interactive – for listening, learning and performing

**The modular Ocarina teaching materials** can be put together in different ways to lead classes incrementally through stages of skill acquisition, reading of music, composing, and performing. When playing Ocarinas, pupils experience music from historical periods: 'Music Time-Traveller' gives a world history of music "from Stone Age to Space Age"; 'Music World-Explorer' introduces genres of music that include works by "great composers and musicians".

**Each song provides a new musical experience to build knowledge and develop pupils' instrumental and vocal skills simultaneously.** Pupils create music individually and communally with composing projects in 'Music Code-Cracker'. These involve experimenting with sound-patterns and codes to create musical messages.

**Through listening, playing and singing, pupils also explore and use the "inter-related dimensions" of music.**

'Music Music-Maker' systematically introduces musical elements such as harmony, structure, tempo and texture as elements to identify and use, rather than as a list of abstract terms. All Ocarina books develop pupils' understanding of music as a language and encourage playing, composing and communicating using "appropriate musical notations". These include Ocarina tablature, staff notation, and a variety of graphic scores.

# Ocarina Music Curriculum: (KS1) age 5 to 7

## Music Key Stage 1 (KS1) – National curriculum in England

### Programme of study: content

"Pupils should be taught to:

- use voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
  - play tuned and untuned instruments musically
  - listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
  - experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music"
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### Key Stage 1 – age 5 to 7

Involve KS1 pupils actively in music by singing, moving, chanting, clapping, listening, and playing instruments. At KS1, pupils are generally only given opportunity to play **untuned** instruments, as it is assumed that learning to play tuned instruments at this age is too demanding. This may be true of whole-class lessons on recorders or orchestral instruments; **with Ocarinas, the learning process is different.**

The 4-hole Oc® is small enough for little fingers to handle, and easy enough for very young players to play. Its sound is gentle, even when large groups play together. Most importantly, pupils at KS1 are able to follow the Ocarina-chart music, even before they have learned to read: OcPix™ tablature promotes reading-readiness by helping pupils identify and play a full octave of notes and perform a wide variety of songs and tunes.

A six-year-old will normally learn new skills far more quickly than a five-year-old. The bespoke teacher and pupil books guide classes into learning to play the Ocarina at every age. They help pupils identify and play notes, make high or low sounds, and start and stop together. They also introduce intonation, expression, pitch, and all the "inter-related dimensions of music" through **doing**.

**Warm up games** spring naturally out of learning to play the beginner tunes in any of the Ocarina books. Sing the songs, clap the rhythms, and play the tunes bit-by-bit, line-by-line and all the way through, with or without backings. Most importantly, enjoy music with a great sense of fun as you learn **to play** together.

The **Beginner books** to consider for this age-group are 'Music Zero-to-Hero' and '1-2-3 Ocarina' for five year olds onwards and also, from the age of six, 'Play your Ocarina Book 1'. **Top KS1 pupils can progress** to any of the following in any order: 'Book 2', 'Music Code-Cracker', 'Music World-Explorer', 'Music Music-Maker', 'Music Time-Traveller'.

We know of **three- and four-year-olds** who can play whole books of Ocarina music. They play with parental support and yet rarely have formal teaching. In your whole-class music lessons, you will find a broad range of abilities. Each child will be developing at a different rate. **Give time to play.** Allow quick-learners the chance to shine by giving any, who "get it" early, opportunities to **demonstrate their skills** to the rest of the class. **Keep everyone together** by singing. Use easier-to-play tunes to **showcase the abilities of those who are slower to pick things up.**

**Baseline skills gained are:** the **dexterity** of holding and playing the Ocarina using the first two fingers to change notes; **breath-control** for creating a steady stream of breath, rather than just blowing; and **reading** a variety of notations. Control of the first two fingers is well-developed from 12 months onwards; reading Ocarina charts predates alphabetic reading; following music down the page **promotes reading-readiness.**

By playing Ocarinas, KS1 pupils develop **general musicianship** through **listening, singing, and performing.** They can carry on playing throughout KS2 and into KS3 years using newly extended repertoire, and those who wish can take external Music Teacher Board (MTB) exams, from pre-Grade to Grade 5, at any stage in their school career.

# Ocarina Music Curriculum: (KS2) age 7 to 11

## Music Key Stage 2 (KS2) – National curriculum in England

### Programme of study: content

"Pupils should be taught to sing and play musically with increasing confidence and control. They should develop an understanding of musical composition, organising and manipulating ideas within musical structures and reproducing sounds from aural memory."

"Pupils should be taught to:

- play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music
- listen with attention to details and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- use and understand staff and other musical notations
- appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians
- develop an understanding of the history of music"

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### Key Stage 2 – age 7 to 11

**Singing is fundamental to any music education; playing tuned musical instruments goes hand-in-hand with singing.**

Of all wind instruments, the Ocarina is the most practical. It is small and portable. It is pitched to match the range of a child's voice. And pupils can play recognisable tunes on the Ocarina straight away, using a full octave of notes.

**The Ocarina is deceptively versatile.** Pupils with limited physical dexterity can handle the four finger-holes to play all the notes, and recognisable tunes, from the outset. All pupils can perform solo and in ensembles using skills gained in whole-class Ocarina lessons. Students with any form of reading difficulty gain confidence by following the tablature in Ocarina music books. And the content of these books is suitable for singing as well as whole-class Ocarina-playing. Gifted and talented pupils can go on to higher levels of performing by taking MTB music exams up to Grade 5.

**Pupils should progress musically over several years, not just one:** to play instruments "with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression" the same instrument should be played year-on-year. If pupils have played Ocarinas at KS1, then continue this work in KS2. If Ocarinas are new to pupils, then there are several ways of beginning.

At the **start of KS2**, any of the beginner books will give security to first-time players, and encourage the rapid progress that will help them thrive. All-age material in 'Music Zero-to-Hero', '1-2-3 Ocarina' and 'Play your Ocarina Book 1' provides initial skills needed for going on to a more advanced level. Each book gives a firm foundation for music-making through following Ocarina notation and staff notation too, making the transition to music-reading easy.

**Older KS2 pupils** can start similarly, or learn to play through exploring the contents of 'Music Code-Cracker', 'Music Music-Maker', 'Music World-Explorer' and 'Music Time-Traveller'. These books are full of cross-curricular projects.

**Composition and improvisation** can be caught and taught using 'Music Code-Cracker' and 'Music Music-Maker'. These two books focus on exploring and creating music using all its "inter-related dimensions" and include practical ideas for brainstorming and notating music. 'Music World-Explorer' and 'Music Time-Traveller' dynamically introduce "music drawn from different traditions" and help pupils understand the "history of music" through performing.

**The Oc® and its music have been developed by teachers for teachers:** all the material is aimed at giving children the best music education possible and at supporting class teachers to deliver lessons that are well-structured, musical and enjoyable for all. When using Ocarinas and voices in whole-class music lessons, the curriculum bullet points above can become a tick list of achievements for all the pupils in your classes.

# Ocarina Music Curriculum: (KS3) age 11 to 14

## Music Key Stage 3 (KS3) – National curriculum in England

### Programme of study: content

"Pupils should build on their previous knowledge and skills through performing, composing and listening. They should develop their vocal and/or instrumental fluency, accuracy and expressiveness; and understand musical structures, styles, genres and traditions, identifying the expressive use of musical dimensions. They should listen with increasing discrimination and awareness to inform their practice as musicians. They should use technologies appropriately and appreciate and understand a wide range of musical contexts and styles."

"Pupils should be taught to:

- play and perform confidently in a range of solo and ensemble contexts using their voice, playing instruments musically, fluently and with accuracy and expression
- improvise and compose; and extend and develop musical ideas by drawing on a range of musical structures, styles, genres and traditions
- use staff and other relevant notations appropriately and accurately in a range of musical styles, genres and traditions
- identify and use the inter-related dimensions of music expressively and with increasing sophistication, including use of tonalities, different types of scales and other musical devices
- listen with increasing discrimination to a wide range of music from great composers and musicians
- develop a deepening understanding of the music that they perform and to which they listen, and its history"

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### Key Stage 3 – age 11 to 14

Pupils often arrive at KS3 with **wildly differing levels of musical knowledge and skill**, depending on the quality and extent of their KS1 and KS2 experience. Building on "previous knowledge and skill" may be challenging for a KS3 music teacher who has to draw pupils together from diverse backgrounds.

**Pupils can learn to play the Ocarina in a short space of time:** start with this brand-new instrument as a first activity. Those with limited musical experience will gain an early sense of achievement, and those who already play other instruments will appreciate the unique challenge of this new one. Following Ocarina tablature is equally easy for all, and particularly helpful for those who do not yet read music. Understanding of staff notation develops quickly as more tunes "get under the fingers".

**Ocarina playing fulfils all the curriculum criteria shown above:** playing and performing, improvising and composing, reading notations in different styles, making use of all the elements of music, listening to a wide range of music and developing a deep understanding of the music that they listen to and perform. It will also take any individual up to a Grade 5 Exam performance standard, should they wish to pursue Ocarina-playing beyond the classroom.

**Ocarina music books are published for all-age playing:** 'Music World-Explorer' and 'Music Time-Traveller' introduce a "range of musical styles, genres and traditions" and give insight into the history of music through performing. Pupils can listen with discernment to the authentic sounds of music from many world cultures and historic eras. Playing Vivaldi's 'Spring', Handel's 'Water Music' and Pachelbel's 'Canon' go hand-in-hand with performing early music such as 'Orientis Partibus' and 'La Mourisque', and modern music in styles such as Tango, Ragtime and Disco.

'Music Code-Cracker' and 'Music Music-Maker', look at **communication through music**, helping students to create their own musical codes and compose enigmatic pieces for others to decipher. These books introduce minimalism, a wide variety of scales, and many practical ways for composing rhythms, melodies and harmonies.

**The Ocarina is a simple instrument.** It has a chameleon sound that fits naturally into any style of music. It is not loud and is therefore easily manageable when whole classes and year groups play. It fits any ensemble and gives all pupils an instrumental voice on which to build. Amongst the forms of music introduced are 12-bar-blues, rock and roll, call and response, and theme and variation. **The Ocarina repertoire is broad, exciting and fun.**

## Intent, Implementation, Impact

What age can pupils play Ocarina music? How well should they play it? What music should they listen to and create? What do we expect pupils to achieve in curriculum music lessons, and how will we know when they have achieved it?

Any child from the age of five upwards can play an Ocarina. All children can sing. The more they listen, play and sing, the more experienced, competent, and 'in tune' they become. Individual and group achievements will vary according to age, ability and experience. How much they can play and at what age is outlined in descriptions of each book and in the 'Ocarina Stages of Playing' overview chart. Ocarina music books guide each step, from first notes to performing.

The following general points may guide your planning and inspire you to clarify your own specific aims and methods:

### Intent...

- ✓ teach all pupils to play tuned musical instruments, and specifically Ocarinas
- ✓ use instruments and voices to explore, create and recreate music
- ✓ learn to communicate, using the language of music
- ✓ discover the breadth and depth of the world of music through listening to and playing a **broad repertoire**
- ✓ prepare and perform music to entertain others
- ✓ read and record music using a variety of methods and musical notations

### Implementation...

- ✓ use Ocarina books to teach whole classes to play the English Ocarina, building a repertoire for singing and playing
- ✓ play and sing through a book or more each year with increasingly challenging, age-appropriate, music
- ✓ explore music from the past and from around the world through listening, practising and performing
- ✓ build a group sound with voices, Ocarinas, and other instruments including class percussion, ukuleles, recorders, etc
- ✓ listen to each other, and to a variety of live and recorded musical performances

### Impact...

- all pupils can
- ✓ demonstrate their singing and Ocarina-playing skills
- ✓ play great music from the past and from around the world
- ✓ create their own musical pieces individually and/or in groups and record it
- ✓ give concerts and public performances to audiences
- ✓ understand, read, and use a variety of musical notations
- ✓ gain a sense of achievement, a love of music, and a desire to do more each year

## Immersion

"Music is a universal language" and the best way to learn any language is through full immersion: hearing and copying the sound of the language frequently, and repeating short, simple, everyday phrases until they build into sentences. To communicate in any language, a voice is needed. In music, this is both a singing and an instrumental voice.

Music lessons therefore need to be full of listen-ing, sing-ing and play-ing: the "do-ing" informs the "learn-ing" and not the other way around. We are not cramm-ing children's minds with knowledge but rather activat-ing their brains. Activation happens through the process of music mak-ing, when pupils are given opportunity to hear and make music frequently, collaboratively, intentionally, and always non-judgmentally.

### When learning a language we need... a voice | something to say | someone to say it to.

Ocarina songs have didactic lyrics, evocative musical backings, and catchy melodies and harmonies. For example, the Hawaiian words-of-welcome in 'Sing Aloha' are interspersed with descriptions of life in these tropical, volcanic, Pacific islands. The sound of Hawaiian guitar, steel pans and ukulele is redolent of sun, sand and sea. When you perform the long, gently chromatic, flowing phrases on Ocarinas, you will whisk audiences far away on a relaxing musical holiday.

The English National Curriculum states that students need to **develop singing and playing "with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression"**. This happens when the same instrument is used regularly each week, year-on-year. Playing a different instrument every year does not make a "jack-of-all-trades" but rather a "master of none"; learning to play any new musical instrument takes time. **With the Ocarina, mastery is possible at every stage of playing.**

**Pupils can learn to play the English Ocarina quickly, and continue playing competently over many years, from KS1 through KS2 to KS3, with growing skill, a broadening repertoire, and ever-increasing musical understanding.**

## Model Music Curriculum (MMC) 2021

This guidance was published in March 2021 for use with the **statutory** English National Curriculum (see the Music Programmes of Study included in this Ocarina Curriculum document). The Model Music Curriculum is free for all to access, with helpful ideas for teachers who follow any curriculum, not just the English one. The MMC suggestions are **non-statutory** and are **exemplars only** of what may be achieved in music lessons with 5- to 14-year-olds.

The MMC advice on singing, listening, composing and performing is all helpful. Composition ideas may be adapted for Ocarinas, to add to the many Ocarina-specific composing ideas in the 'Adventurous Music-Making' Teacher books.

The MMC document also has an interesting *Appendices* section for reference. *Appendix 1* is a *Glossary* of terms and *Appendix 2* is a *Chronology* of recommended listening. These are broad listings. 'Adventurous Music-Making' Teacher books have targeted lists that class teachers and music specialists may find more helpful when using Ocarinas.

For example, the MMC reference to the term 'tremolo' is general, yet does not refer to wind instruments. The Ocarina reference is specific, referring to Song 9 '*Song of the Maya*' in 'Music Time-Traveller'. Here pupils practise tremolos in response to hearing them on audio tracks, seeing them notated on the page, and then playing and performing. **This Ocarina approach is holistic, putting terms into action to make them memorable, relevant and understandable.**

The MMC *Appendix 2 - Chronology* is extensive, and is for listening-only. Ocarina books feature similar pieces to listen to, and these are presented as pupil-friendly bitesize musical arrangements. Pupils can therefore listen, sing and play the great works. Through this practical activity, pupils gain a working knowledge of the music to add to their listening. This is another example of the holistic pupil experience gained with Ocarinas and Ocarina music.

Below are just a few MMC-listed works that are also arranged for Ocarina. Some are renamed in Ocarina books to accommodate new lyrics that add colourful background information and historical context. Pupils learn the tune's rhythm through the rhythm of the lyrics and, as a result of singing, go on to play the pieces more accurately. Thus both music and meaning are internalised intuitively, and remembered.

1000 <i>Orientis Partibus</i>	Song 10 ' <i>From the East</i> '	'Music Time-Traveller'
1551 <i>La Mourisque</i>	Song 12 ' <i>Minstrel Mayhem</i> '	'Music Time-Traveller'
1680 <i>Canon in 'D'</i> ( <i>Pachelbel</i> )	Song 19 ' <i>Turning</i> '	'Music Music-Maker'
1808 <i>Symphony No 5</i> ( <i>Beethoven</i> )	Song 16 ' <i>V is for Victory</i> '	'Music Code-Cracker'
1822 <i>Symphony No 9</i> ( <i>Beethoven</i> )	Page 27 ' <i>Ode to Joy</i> '	'Play your Ocarina Book 1'

**Ocarina arrangements are recorded to a high standard for listening and accompanying.** The MMC recommend their listening pieces for particular curriculum years: '*Orientis Partibus*' is for Year 8. If Y3 pupils are ready to listen, sing and play Song 10 '*From the East*', then they can enjoy the fun, colour and sound of medieval music when they are ready, five years before Year 8, and sing some Latin as well. **Ocarina music can be pupil-specific rather than age-specific.**

**The Ocarina repertoire extends through every period and style** including ragtime, tango, jazz, blues, rock and roll, minimalism and disco. Songs in 'Music Time-Traveller' also predate MMC examples by 2,500 years, with ancient music originally written in cuneiform on tablets, and by scribes on papyrus. These are adapted for pupils to perform, backed by lyre, harps and gongs. Song 9 '*Song of the Maya*' even includes the sound of actual 2,000-year-old Maya Ocarinas.

This **authentic musical experience** continues in 'Music World-Explorer' with music representing different cultures and traditions. Songs include '*Kalinka*' from Russia and '*Siyahamba*' from South Africa, ready to sing in English, **and play** on Ocarinas from the age of six upwards. These Ocarina books relate well to History and Geography primary curricula, as do 'Music Code-Cracker' and 'Music Music-Maker' to Maths and Literacy. Cross-curricular projects are enhanced by including music. **'Adventurous Music-Making' titles are designed to help whole schools become musical.**

The English inspection agency, **Ofsted**, does not favour any instrument, music method, or scheme. However, it does **recommend that pupils play the same instrument** over a longer period than a year, to reach higher levels of skill, and to avoid needless repetition. It also recognises that no single scheme can fulfil all music-teaching requirements.

**Ocarina-playing and singing using Ocarina-teaching materials ✓ fulfil the statutory curriculum, ✓ are consistent with MMC non-statutory guidance, and ✓ enable every pupil to learn to play a musical instrument competently.** Singing and Ocarina-playing provide pupils with a rich, dynamic, hands-on experience of music. Musicians can take an Ocarina and run with it. General class teachers, who introduce Ocarinas to curriculum lessons, discover that pupils really can learn to play, and that their music lessons are full of action, **establishing music as the dominant language.**



## Time

How much time should we give to music? The Model Music Curriculum suggests an hour a week for pupils aged 5 - 14, plus extra for instrumental and ensemble lessons. You may have more or less time available for music in your school. Rather than ask "how much time do you have?" the better question is "how well can this time be used?".

Those who use purpose-made Ocarina teaching-resources and books know that pupils achieve more with an Ocarina in a much shorter time than with other instruments. For example, **eight-year-olds** play an octave in two keys (9 notes) in their first **few weeks** when using Book 1. This normally takes a **few years** of whole-class wind instrument lessons. The Model Music Curriculum anticipates that pupils in brass ensembles will be at this standard by the age of **thirteen**. Not only do pupils learn the "nuts and bolts" of instrument-playing more quickly and at a younger age with Ocarinas, they also make beautiful sounds more easily. For example, creating convincing bird-song on an orchestral flute takes years, as the flute is mechanically complex, and its sound production notoriously difficult. Whilst flute players are still huffing and puffing to produce any sort of sound, Ocarina players are trilling like birds in their very first lessons.

**Why do pupils achieve so much, so quickly, when playing Ocarinas?** The answer is two-fold. English 4-hole Ocarinas have been designed with simplicity and easy access in mind. And Ocarina tablature and teaching resources have been developed by Ocarina-teaching experts for speed-teaching from the outset.

**Having the right instrument is important.** UK-made English Ocarinas have rims around the finger-holes. These rims are effective in helping young, and blind, players to feel and cover the holes completely. They are manufactured in six popular rainbow colours and are winners of the "Best Music Education Product" award. Cheaper imported Ocarinas have none of these advantages and are consequently less easy, or even impossible, to play; so beware!

**Having the right music is also important.** All Ocarina books have rapid progress built-in. They are "page-turners" in the best sense of the word. Children cannot wait for their next lesson. The books promote reading-readiness in the very young, and are dyslexia-friendly for pupils with reading difficulties. Playing from a book demonstrates reading skills as well as musical ability. Choose a new book to follow each year and give pupils a musical challenge and a real sense of progress. Some books naturally lead on to others. See the 'Ocarina Stages of Playing' chart for full details.

**The principle of "little and often"** is true for younger pupils. Three twenty minute sessions per week is better than one whole hour. However, when pupils listen, sing and play in each lesson, this time can easily be filled. Composing and other projects will mean that an hour lesson is well used. When extra time is allocated for "wider opportunities" or "first-access" instrument learning, **this time could be added to Ocarina curriculum lessons** to fulfil this purpose.

## Attitudes and Expectations

**Learning to play the Ocarina introduces a "can do" attitude.** The principles of playing the Ocarina can be grasped in just a few minutes by pupils and they can see, from the word "go", that playing the Ocarina is an attainable goal.

This "can do" attitude is valuable, as many children learn more in school of what they "can't do" rather than of what they "can". As pupils perform music in public for the first time on Ocarinas, the sound is more pleasing than anyone might anticipate. This is because Ocarinas blend well together, with no shrillness, when played in large numbers. Pupils soon learn that they can surprise audiences with their well-practiced skills and be applauded for their achievement. And those who are slower to "get it" will be carried along by those who do.

When we give pupils large, shiny and relatively expensive instruments to learn to play, their initial excitement and enthusiasm is high. However, this does not necessarily translate into long-term progress over several years. With an Ocarina, pupils learn that it's **"not what you've got, but what you do with it that counts"**. They get into music more quickly, play 'proper' recognisable tunes straight away, and develop higher level musical skills early. The effect of all this is highly motivating. **Music is a subject in which pupils do things – things they can demonstrate to anyone.**

Because the Ocarina is not orchestral, expensive or shiny, it **promotes humility**. This small, portable flute has a gentle attractive sound. When pupils work together in class to make a pleasing group sound, they learn lessons for life. They learn that the music they make is more important than the instrument. An instrument is just an instrument: a means to an end. **And the 'end' is music-making and the enjoyment that this brings to players and audiences alike.**

**Expect high standards** of music-learning when pupils play Ocarinas. When "playing" is the key activity in lessons, music is "caught rather than taught". Children don't realise they are achieving "curriculum targets" and developing skills. They can come out of lessons with a smile, thinking they did no work at all and just played! As teachers have told us on retirement, Ocarina-playing has been the happiest activity of their week. Let pupils learn without knowing, as you enjoy music together!

## Teachers and Classroom Management

**Teaching whole-class music with Ocarinas need not be the preserve of any particular teacher.** Just as the Ocarina and its music are inclusive, so is its teaching. General class teachers, music specialists and visiting peripatetic teachers all teach successfully with Ocarinas in mainstream and special schools at KS1, KS2 and KS3.

**Musicians** have the natural advantage of knowing how to teach music. **Class teachers** know their children from day to day and have general teaching and class management skills that may not be second nature to visiting music teachers. **Therefore, everyone has something to learn when they start teaching whole-class music.**

Pick up an Ocarina and work out how to play. The music in any Ocarina book will guide your fingers. Note the teaching points in the books and experiment to find your best sound. Once you can play a few tunes yourself, you are ready to teach. Keep one step ahead of your pupils. Each book has plenty of pupil material and teacher guidance.

Some of your pupils will eventually play more fluently than you can, so ask them to demonstrate their playing in your lessons. This is exactly the same as teachers pointing out examples of good practice amongst students in swimming and PE lessons, where it is the pupils that demonstrate the swimming or gymnastic moves, rather than the teacher.

On the subject of swimming, the first time you teach 30 pupils to play the Ocarina will be like the first time you swam. It happened by getting wet and by splashing around! You eventually sink or swim. If you think too long about teaching whole-class music, you will never do it. If you plan well and take the plunge, it can be exhilarating.

And if you don't consider yourself "musical" yet are daring enough to play a few notes on the Ocarina to show your pupils, they will reward and surprise you. Expect great things from yourself and your pupils: great things will happen.

**Teachers in some schools encourage peer-to-peer teaching.** For example, 10-year-old players can teach 7-year-olds to play a piece and then perform it together. It is a well-known fact that the best way to learn something is to teach it. When Ocarina-playing spreads through your school, revisit simpler music with older children in large all-age groups to give a new dimension to their music. When 120+ pupils perform together, they feel as if they are in an orchestra.

**As Ocarina-playing and singing progress, try adding other instruments to your class band.** Introduce percussion to practise rhythms, and tuned percussion (glockenspiels, xylophones, etc) to add harmony, timbre and texture. Class teachers could ask peripatetic teachers to help them in this. Guitar chords above the staff may be used with ukuleles. Players of other 'C' instruments such as recorders, flutes and violins can read the music straight from the books. Pupils who play transposing instruments such as clarinets and trumpets will need to learn to play from 'C' rather than 'B flat' music: this is their chance to learn to read at sight, or for their instrumental teacher to transpose the music for them.

**Some Ocarina material is supported by whiteboard teaching resources.** This lifts pupils eyes to the screen and keeps them together. It is helpful, but not essential. There can be a digital disconnect when pupils see music on the screen one moment, gone the next. Turning the physical pages of a book and playing methodically through it gives them ownership of the music, and a tangible sense of progression. When pupils handle acoustic instruments, produce and control the sound themselves, and follow music on the page, they are learning to perform like 'professionals'.

**Practical teaching considerations** include whether pupils have their own Ocarina and music book, and if they can take them home or leave them in class. Ocarinas are easily stored in storage boxes, 12 per box. Each Oc<sup>®</sup> can be numbered with a label on the string, or indelible pen mark on the body. A shared Ocarina must be sterilised before a new player uses it. In some schools, pupils are allocated their own numbered school Ocarina and return it to their tray or storage box each lesson. These only need to be sterilised at the end of the term or year in which they are played, before the next new player begins. The best solution, of course, is when each pupil can keep their own Ocarina and Book.

**Teacher Books** are available for all 'Adventurous Music-Making' titles and supplied free of charge in some Class Packs. **Teaching notes** are available for each Ocarina music book for free download: these are also supplied with **Bulk Buys** and **Class Packs** that are named after individual book titles, or grouped in pairs as '**Beginner**', '**Composer**', '**Explorer**'.

Our goal is that **all teachers succeed with Ocarina-teaching and all pupils succeed in Ocarina-playing.** As teachers ourselves, we are happy to help on the phone, by email and with online or in-person CPD. Contact David and Christa Liggins on 01536 485963 or email [music@ocarina.co.uk](mailto:music@ocarina.co.uk) with any comments and requests. [www.ocarina.co.uk](http://www.ocarina.co.uk)

# Ocarina-Playing Stages and Levels

Beginner	Levels	Series	MTB Exam Grade
Music Zero-to-Hero	1 to 6	Adventurous Music-Making	A to 1
1-2-3 Ocarina	1 to 7	Adventurous Music-Making	A to 2
Book 1	2 to 8	Play your Ocarina	A to 2
Composer			
Music Code-Cracker	2 to 10	Adventurous Music-Making	A to 3
Music Music-Maker	3 to 11	Adventurous Music-Making	A to 2
Explorer			
Music World-Explorer	2 to 12	Adventurous Music-Making	A to 4
Music Time-Traveller	3 to 13	Adventurous Music-Making	B to 4
Extension			
Book 2	4 to 12	Play your Ocarina	1 to 4
Ocarina Carols	4 to 11	Play your Ocarina	B to 3
Songs of Praise	4 to 11	Play your Ocarina	none
Book 3	6 to 15	Play your Ocarina	2 to 5
Book 4	8 to 15	Play your Ocarina	3 to 5

## Stages of Playing

The Ocarina 'Stages of Playing' chart represents the above information visually. It shows that **Ocarina-Playing Levels progress from 1**, when pupils learn to hold the Ocarina, make a sound, and read music for the first time, **to level 15**, where Grade 5 pieces require considerable musical ability and skill, and are suitable for GCSE Music performance.

The area **between levels 1 and 12** is where most pupils will play in whole-class lessons: at **KS1**, pupils should all reach **level 3**, with **many going beyond**; **KS2** pupils will reach **level 8**, with **some going beyond**; and at **KS3**, pupils may reach **level 12**, depending on the length and quality of their playing experience.

Ocarina Stages of Playing																
KS1 (age 5–7)	KS1 playing			KS1 extension												
KS2 (age 7–11)	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
KS3 (age 11–14)		KS3 preparation			KS3 playing							KS3 extension				
LEVEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
MTB Exam Grades			A	B		1		2		3		4			5	
Adventurous Music-Making																
Music Zero-to-Hero	KS1 playing															
1-2-3 Ocarina	KS1 extension															
Music Code-Cracker	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Music Music-Maker	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Music World-Explorer	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Music Time-Traveller	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension				KS3 extension			
Play Your Ocarina																
Book 1	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Book 2	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension				KS3 extension			
Book 3	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension				KS3 extension			
Book 4	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension				KS3 extension			
Ocarina Carols	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Songs of Praise	KS2 preparation		KS2 playing						KS2 extension							
Instrument Choice	4-hole Oc® pieces												6-hole Oc® pieces			
	6-hole Oc® preparation			4-hole Oc® pieces						6-hole Oc® pieces						

## Levels and Grades

Each music book covers a **range of levels**. For example, the material in 'Music Zero-to-Hero' goes from **levels 1 to 6**. Most pupils will play happily all the way through this book. However, to reach level 6, an individual would have to play the **most challenging pieces** to a high standard. Groups of KS1 pupils can be expected to play the whole book and reach a **baseline level 3** in curriculum music lessons; individuals within the class may play to a **much higher standard**.

The **MTB Exam Grades** shown in the chart are: **A** (Pre-Grade Introductory), **B** (Pre-Grade Higher) and **Grades 1 to 5**. The Ocarina syllabus was prepared by David Liggins, at Ocarina Workshop, assisted by other experienced teachers. The standard of each piece was carefully cross-referenced with those selected for other instruments such as clarinet, trumpet, flute and recorder, in ABRSM, Trinity and MTB exams. These grades give fixed points of achievement that are universally understood and accepted in music education circles, and are **Ofqual-approved**.

Further support materials available from Ocarina Workshop include a '**Progress Chart**' for each book which lists the pieces with their levels, and the exam grades of any that are in the MTB Syllabus. This will guide you to appropriate books and pieces that match the performing experience of your classes, and will help you to plan for progression.

## Assessing Music: Criteria and Methods

**There is no formal requirement for assessment in curriculum music lessons.** However, there is a need for teachers to see pupils' musical skills and knowledge develop year-on-year through well-planned lessons. Here are some ideas...

- perform as a whole-class to audiences, and demonstrate improving skills and a wider repertoire every year
- play through each book in sections, ticking all the things the whole-class can do in the Progress Chart
- listen to each pupil play an 'own choice' tune individually from time-to-time so they can play solo and you can hear them – you may be surprised!
- give pupils opportunities to play in groups, and give groups time to perform to the class; encourage all helpful observations and comments, and develop positive critical listening within your classes
- record audio/video of whole-class performances and create a portfolio of whole-class musical achievement
- record some of the composing that individuals/groups and whole classes have been involved in
- showcase individual and whole-class musical successes as often as possible
- keep a note of music listened to: from own compositions, to great works, and concerts by visiting performers
- encourage pupils who hope to take instrumental exams to record, self-assess and 'mark' their own playing
- listen to 'before-and-after' recordings of whole-class playing and ask pupils to assess using your criteria or their own: accurate rhythms, silence in rests, singing/playing together smoothly and/or dramatically, etc.

**These are just ideas for assessing and recording progress.** Think of them as forming a scrapbook of highlights to look back at and enjoy, and to draw on for school parent evenings and other special occasions. Use them to punctuate a term of music-making with a moment of quiet and thoughtful evaluation. Continuous improvement is made possible by regular practice and evaluation; keep this fresh by using many different approaches; keep your classes guessing!

**Ask pupils questions that lead to evaluation:** What couldn't we do at the start of the year that we can do now? What did you notice about that group as they played in 4-part harmony? How did we create dynamics in 'Skye Boat Song' when we played it in class; why didn't it work as well when we played in assembly? Why did you choose this particular piece? What was your favourite piece to play/listen to this term and why? Encourage critical thinking / understanding.

When you listen to individuals, you may want to note something about their playing, **to inform your further teaching**. For example, one pupil may make a naturally beautiful sound, and another a very 'huffy-puffy' one. To help with this, you could teach the whole-class to hold sustained notes to improve their sound. Then ask everyone to copy a short phrase played by the first pupil, if he/she is happy to demonstrate, and to imitate this. Peer-to-peer teaching can be very effective. At a more advanced level, a pupil may seem anxious when playing solo. Let them play to a friend rather than to the teacher, or let them record their playing for you to listen to later. Reproducible Progress Charts available for each book can be used to list the accomplishments of individuals, groups and whole-classes, as you go along.

**Instrumental exams** test accuracy, expression and technical proficiency. In curriculum lessons, an important purpose of study is that pupils should "develop a love of music". This is not dependent on technical proficiency but in the joy of creating and making music together. This is why the Ocarina Music Curriculum includes a broad, lively repertoire with instrument-playing, listening, singing and composing at the centre. This varied approach increases competency, keeps everything fresh with each new piece, and leads to continuous incremental progress by playing the same instrument.

**A lifelong love of music depends on first experiences, so make them challenging, fun, and enjoyable for all!**

## Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) / First Access (usually for pupils aged 8 to 10)

**Playing instruments** is key to this Ocarina Music Curriculum. It is also key to Music Hub WCET projects. A Research Report into 'Whole Class Ensemble Teaching' (Birmingham City University, 2017) identifies two main functions of whole-class instrumental work, as reported by Music Hubs: 1) **music learning starting with the instrument (MSWI)** 2) **music via the instrument (MVI)**. This Ocarina Curriculum aims to **fulfil both these criteria**.

**Ocarina-playing is already part of WCET projects.** However, the Ocarina can also **be taught by general class teachers**. The Ocarina was 'voted' third most popular instrument in the first year of 'Wider Opportunities', with teachers finding it accessible, portable and practical. **As an instrument in its own right**, with its own repertoire, playing the Oc<sup>®</sup> can be pursued to a high level for **instrument-only learning**. Its versatility and voice-like quality also mean that any class teacher can incorporate Ocarina-playing into curriculum music lessons **to learn about music through music-making**.

The **WCET Report** cited above says, on pages 81 & 82, that Music Hubs and Services **expect a few pupils to reach a pre-Grade or Grade 1 level** after one year of instrumental tuition, and hope most may reach or surpass that level after two years; this is equivalent to levels 3 to 6 in the Stages of Ocarina-Playing chart. They state that pupils play at least **five notes in the first year** on a melodic instrument. In Ocarina lessons, **KS1, KS2 and KS3 pupils will surpass this** in their first year. They would read and play **ten or more notes fluently**. They would also be able to perform a broad repertoire, having acquired musical terminology, skills and understanding appropriate to that repertoire.

## Music Teacher Board (MTB) Ocarina Exams

Instrumental exams give **individuals** the opportunity to perform pieces, scales and exercises to an external examiner. With the MTB, the examiner is always a specialist in the instrument being played; the teacher sends recordings of the pupil's playing for assessment. **To record a pupil in a friendly environment, at a time that suits them, offers the best introduction to instrumental music exams.** All the details can be found here: [www.mtbexams.com/syllabus/ocarina](http://www.mtbexams.com/syllabus/ocarina)

Students are assessed on: accuracy of rhythm, pitch, and fluency of their playing; expression through phrasing, use of dynamics, articulation, style, and musicality; and technique regarding tempo, control, tone and overall technical skill. 4-hole and 6-hole Oc<sup>®</sup> can be played up to and including Grade 2. From Grade 3 onwards, a 6-hole Oc<sup>®</sup> is required in order to play the extra 6-hole notes in the more challenging scales, exercises and pieces.

## Instrument Choice

Most first-time players are given a 4-hole Oc<sup>®</sup> to play because it is simple and low-cost. It has just 4 finger-holes and no thumb-holes. The extra notes are played by opening thumb-holes. These notes are needed for Exam Grades 3, 4 & 5 and are introduced in Book 2. They appear occasionally in Carols, Songs of Praise and Book 3, and in most of Book 4.

Teachers who intend to pursue Ocarina-playing long-term may like to invest extra in 6-hole Oc<sup>®</sup> from the start. **With thumb-holes covered, pupils effectively have a 4-hole Oc<sup>®</sup>.** They can therefore begin simply and continue seamlessly on through the more advanced books with the 6-hole Ocarina. Fingercharts below are for 4-hole and 6-hole Ocarinas.

The image displays two musical staves with notes and corresponding finger charts for 4-hole and 6-hole Ocarinas. The first staff shows notes for C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, and G#. The second staff shows notes for A, A#/Bb, B, C, C#, D, D#, and E. Finger charts are represented by squares with circles indicating finger placement (black for covered, white for open). For 4-hole Ocarinas, the charts are: C# (4 fingers), D (3 fingers), D# (4 fingers), E (3 fingers), F (4 fingers), F# (3 fingers), G (4 fingers), and G# (3 fingers). For 6-hole Ocarinas, the charts are: A (2 fingers), A#/Bb (3 fingers), B (2 fingers), C (2 fingers), C# (3 fingers), D (4 fingers), D# (3 fingers), and E (4 fingers).

**If pupils are not likely to go on to play from Book 3 and Book 4, then the 4-hole Oc<sup>®</sup> is most suitable.** Pupils who are less able find it helpful to have just four finger-holes to cover, and whole-class teaching is made easier when all the finger-holes are visible to the teacher, with no out-of-sight thumb-holes to think about.

## Music for Every Child and Every Teacher™

This Ocarina Workshop strapline is a statement of intent. Over fifty years, David Liggins has explored every avenue for bringing music to the masses: from teaching to busking, manufacturing to publishing, travelling to composing. Why?

To the age of 11, untreatable asthma and eczema prevented David from going to mainstream school. He only survived because of the dedicated staff at Kingsley Special School, Kettering. He could not run, play football, or stay outside for any length of time in the summer; his one achievement was to stay alive. During this time, music filled his head, with little opportunity to express it.

Despite these limitations David went on to mainstream education, gaining a Bachelor of Education honours degree in teaching music to 5-14-year olds. He innovated whole-class instrumental teaching, ran award-winning music groups, busked around the world, and climbed to seventeen thousand feet in the Andes. Although still limited by asthma and eczema, David's passion remains to enable everyone to make music, and he does this through Ocarina Workshop.

Everything David and language teacher Christa prepare is designed to bring Music for Every Child and Every Teacher™. Ocarina music is presented with maximum **clarity**, and instruments created for maximum **accessibility**. Pupils who only have the use of one-hand play 4-hole music on **one-handed Ocarinas**. Pupils with **moderate learning difficulties** can read and play successfully. Publications are noted as being **dyslexia-friendly** and particularly helpful for anyone with **reading difficulties**. And the sky is the limit for pupils and teachers alike.

## EYFS and Creativity

**Pre-School children can play tunes on Ocarinas** because pre-readers can follow the Ocarina music. Remove the string for under 3's to 'play' safely; the Ocarina can even be floated in the bath, or filled with water and played, to explore different notes and sound effects! In **Early Years and Foundation Study (EYFS)**, a music 'play-for-fun' approach will introduce blowing, tapping, singing, stamping, clapping and using Ocarinas in lots of experimental ways.

**Simplicity aids creativity.** With a limited number of holes to cover and a gentle sound to enjoy, pupils can easily and safely experiment with Ocarinas. Adventurous Music-Making Teacher Books have composing and improvising ideas suitable for all ages. Combine Ocarinas, voices and classroom instruments imaginatively to create original music.

## Class Packs and Sharing Instruments

**Ocarina Class Packs** with **Beginner**, **Composer** and **Explorer** materials are available from many educational suppliers. These, and more specific items such as **Extension** materials and one-handed Ocarinas, are also available direct from [www.ocarina.co.uk/shop](http://www.ocarina.co.uk/shop)

**The need to sterilise shared wind instruments** has become more evident in recent times. It is ideal for each pupil to have their own named Ocarina. If the Ocarinas belong to the school, try to allocate the same instrument to the same player every lesson and sterilise it at the end of their course. See [www.ocarina.co.uk/ocarina-acoustics](http://www.ocarina.co.uk/ocarina-acoustics)

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## Keep in touch

This Ocarina Music Curriculum, and curriculum notes for Ocarina books will be updated regularly, so keep in touch. Free downloads can be found at [www.ocarina.co.uk/shop](http://www.ocarina.co.uk/shop) or email [music@ocarina.co.uk](mailto:music@ocarina.co.uk) to be included in a list for **regular updates**. Comments are invited on any of the enclosed; requests for further guidance are welcome.

*David and Christa Liggins  
Ocarina Workshop  
March 2022*