

## Why and How Do We Teach Music?

Music enriches the lives of children and provides them with an expressive language without words. We live in a culture that looks upon music as something that comes to us from the outside, from a CD player, an iPod, a computer, or maybe as the soundtrack to a movie. By teaching children to sing and play instruments, we provide them with a powerful antidote to the mechanized music of our media-driven culture. Children love music. Singing and playing instruments brings them joy and equips them with a language to express thoughts and feelings from the deepest realms of their imagination.



All of the arts are intricately woven into the curriculum here at our school, and music is used in a variety of ways throughout it. It frequently serves as a break from mind work during Main Lesson, or used to enrich lessons on subjects ranging from math to history, by providing an alternate way of approaching the subject matter. Music teaches students a variety of important skills that help build the foundation for a well-rounded education.

Music teaches science. For example, instruments and Chladni Plates are used in the 6th grade Physics Block to teach acoustics.

Music teaches history. In our middle school orchestra classes, students are taught the historical backgrounds to the music they learn, and in 4th and 5th grade music classes, students are taught the biographies of famous composers.

Music teaches geography. Throughout the grades, students are taught songs from many different cultures and on world maps, we show them where the song came from.

Music teaches math. When music reading is first taught in 4th grade, for example, students are taught to divide and subdivide the beat.

Music teaches languages. Violin students, for example, learn quite a few Italian words used in music reading and violin performance.

Music teaches teamwork. It can match any team sport in its demand for all of the players to work together in pursuit of a common goal.

Music teaches an appreciation for beauty. Surely an appreciation for beauty is one of the most powerful motivations for peace and the pursuit of peace.



Finally, music teaches discipline. The child who learns to play a difficult instrument, learns the value of regular, repetitive practice, and develops determination, diligence, and a great appreciation for the value of patience.

## Music is everywhere at our school

Music is integral to our school festivals, assemblies and ceremonies, not to mention the concerts given by 4th through 8th grade students. Find me a day when there isn't a song, or recorder tune floating across the courtyard from several different classrooms and you've found a day when the school is closed. Every class sings. 1st and 2nd graders play the pentatonic flute. 3rd graders play the recorder. 4th and 5th graders play violin. Each middle school class has its own orchestra.



Music and song is at the heart of each school assembly: from the Rose Ceremony in August, to the end of year assembly in June and, of course, eighth grade graduation.



Our Fall Festival in October includes an annual sing-along, and the Spring Festival in May features May Pole dances set to music performed by our students. The Spanish Assembly in February employs Hispanic songs from a variety of cultures to inspire and enrich our study of the Spanish language.



Finally, there are the school concerts: the 4th and 5th grade violin concerts in January, and May, and the middle school concerts in December and May. This is our opportunity to show students that practice pays off, and to show parents just how good our teamwork has become.

My favorite part about the concerts? Seeing my students bubbling over with nervous energy, excitement and enthusiasm.

Our students love to perform. We have given them a wordless language that will continue to bring them joy and comfort throughout their lives.

