



YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL

Junior Music Course

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| Students | Aged 4 or 5 years at the start of the course |
| Length | 2 years (extension courses follow) |
| Lesson format | Group lesson, up to 10 students |
| Frequency | Weekly, term-time - 36 lessons a year |
| Lesson duration | 60 minutes (includes class changeover) |

INSTRUMENT AT HOME

Children will need an instrument at home to practise on. Please provide either a good sounding and regularly tuned piano at concert pitch (A=440Hz) or a keyboard with regular sized keys. (Search engine key word 'PSR' for Yamaha starter keyboards.)

TIPS FOR PARENTS

You are vital to your child's success on the course! Being present in lessons means you know how to support at home.

How you work together is really important - teachers will advise on how to support both in lessons and at home. Two main keys to success are these:

- 1) Sit back and let the children make mistakes - don't correct!
- 2) Make good use of the CDs and DVDs at home, as this really helps children absorb the music.

ABOUT

Traditionally, music is taught as an intellectual activity, often starting with reading music. This is not a suitable approach for children at this age. Yamaha's music education system emphasises **timely education** - teachers follow this important progression as the children learn their pieces in JMC:

listen - sing - play - read/write - create

The sequence of learning begins with listening and absorbing the music, then it is sung, then played then the last stage of learning a piece is reading and writing the notes.

In this way, the keyboard playing becomes the expression of what the children have already absorbed. This natural and musical approach mirrors the acquisition of language skills and is key to the success of the course. It is exciting to watch our students pick up music that they

hear around them and teach themselves how to play it – and wonderful later on to hear students perform music they have composed themselves.

COURSE PROGRESSION

JMC is the foundation of the Yamaha Music Education System:

- *Junior Music Course (JMC)* - weekly group lessons
- *Junior Extension Course (JXC)* - weekly group lessons
- *Junior Advanced Course (JAC)* - weekly group lesson + individual lesson
Advanced Extension Course (AXC) - weekly group lesson + individual lesson

Each stage takes around two years to complete and includes four sets of books.

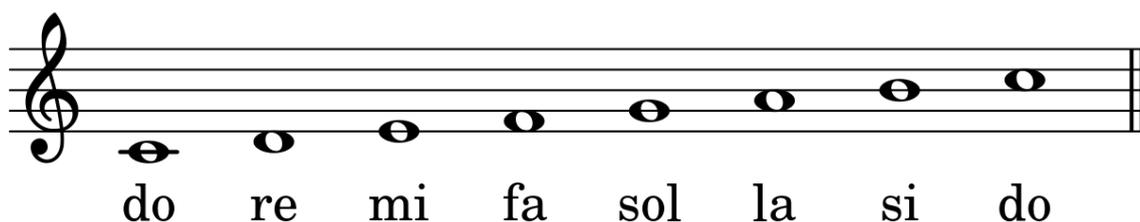
CURRICULUM

All activities in JMC start with listening. Next to the enjoyment of music, ear training is the most important element of this first course because of the developmental stage of the children. The extraordinary level of aural receptiveness at this age is demonstrated by the ease at which a second language can be absorbed.

Singing

Through singing, children experience different moods, images and many musical points in a natural and enjoyable way.

In addition to learning songs with lyrics, we sing solfege songs. **Solfege** is a 'fixed-do' system of notes ('do' is always C, 're' is always D and so on):



Solfege is a crucial part of the teaching method, as it is the way that children can learn music as they would a language. It also plays a big role in pitch awareness.

A note about letter names: These are used to describe the key that music is in - C major or A minor and so on – and are introduced more formally later on. We are sometimes asked whether children having lessons on a second instrument will experience any difficulty - in our experience, it's no problem at all: children become happily bilingual.

Rhythm

During lessons children respond to the pulse or rhythm of the music, helping to develop more musical singing and playing performances - movement and imagery is often used. There are specific rhythm exercises at each stage of the course: in JMC, these take the form of rhythm songs and percussion rhythm ensembles.

Playing

Playing in lessons consists of keyboard games, repertoire and ensembles.

Keyboard games introduce new keyboard concepts in an enjoyable way. Repertoire is the name given to the more substantial pieces that the children learn to play. Our goal is primarily for the children to enjoy music and to express that at their own level. As all the playing is an expression of what the children have absorbed by listening and singing, our main purpose is not simply to find the right note with the right finger - that will be a 'side-effect' - how the music is expressed is what's important.

CERTIFICATE

At the end of this first stage, we hold the 'Fundamental Skills Survey' - more of a celebration than an exam: this is usually the children's first experience of a musical assessment so we make it a happy one!

Yamaha Music Foundation grading is offered at appropriate stages in the extension and advanced courses.

FURTHER NOTES

Please do not book individual piano lessons in addition to the group lessons – one to one lessons are coming later on in the course with Yamaha Music School teachers at Matrix. Adding further piano tuition at this stage disrupts the learning process.

Please communicate about your child's progress with your teacher - we love to hear about successes and we need to hear about concerns. We welcome your feedback at any time.

JMC is a fantastic way for children to learn music - we look forward to welcoming you on the course!

FAIRFIELD HALLS