

**Practice** Homework is an important part of JMC, as it confirms the music sung and played in lessons. Each week listening, singing, writing and playing homework may be given, all of which has been covered in the lesson. This consolidation work makes a huge difference to a child's progress if done for a short time four or five times a week: 'little and often' is the key phrase. Please encourage your child to sing with all their playing at home as well as in lessons. Teachers will set specific DVD visits and we ask you to watch at the same time as often as possible.

**Two 'don'ts'!** 1) When children can sing and play a piece, in lessons they are sometimes asked to follow the notes with their finger as they sing. Please do not point to the notes as the children play or write the names of the notes in the course books, as these things do not help to encourage musical performances or help with reading skills. Notational skills are introduced in relevant and age-appropriate ways during the courses. 2) Please do not press your child's fingers down as they play – this will not help your child to become independent at the keyboard.

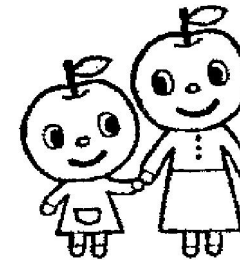
**Ideas for music at home** You could position a CD player near the piano or keyboard so on occasion your child could try playing along. Keeping the keyboard and DVD accessible (and inviting!) is a very positive way to promote practising. Another way to help is for you to keep up with them when they reach trickier pieces, so that you can play the left hand while they play the right hand and vice versa. Your teacher will give you further practising support once the course starts. 'Messing around' and making things up is to be encouraged!

We hope all this is helpful – of course, if you have any questions or worries, always mention them to your teacher, or to our principal teacher, Lindsay MacKenzie. We are keen to support you if you need help with anything and would encourage you to communicate with your teacher about your child's progress .

**Enjoy the course!**

 **YAMAHA**  
YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL

 **MATRIX**  
MUSIC SCHOOL & ARTS CENTRE



Welcome to Matrix  
and the Junior Music Course!

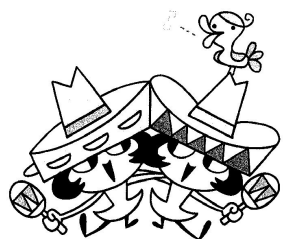
Traditionally, music is taught as an intellectual activity, often starting with reading music. This is not a suitable approach for children at this age. We start by listening, then singing what we have heard, followed by playing what we sang and finally reading and writing the notes. This natural and musical approach mirrors the acquisition of language skills.

The *Junior Music Course* (JMC) is the first of the three courses which comprise Yamaha Music Foundation's *Junior Courses* portfolio. The other two are *Junior Extension* (JXC) and *Junior Advanced* (JAC). JMC and JXC last for two years each, with four sets of books to study in each course. When students reach JAC the weekly group lessons are supplemented by regular individual piano lessons.

It is exciting to watch children studying the Junior Courses pick up music that they hear around them and teach themselves how to play it – and wonderful to hear students perform music they have composed themselves. We stage an annual concert, the *Junior Original Concert* (JOC) that celebrates a selection of the children's composition.

**Listening** All activities in JMC start with listening. Ear training is the most important element of this first course (next to the enjoyment of music, of course!) because of the developmental stage of the children: their extraordinary receptiveness is demonstrated by the ease at which a second language can be taken on at this stage in life. The keyboard playing is therefore just an expression of what the children have already learned through their listening and singing activities.

**Singing** Through songs, children learn about different moods, images and many musical points in an enjoyable way.



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

DO RE MI FA SOL LA SI DO

Solfege is a fundamental part of the teaching method, as it is the way that children can learn music as they would a language; and it is extremely important for pitch awareness. Listening for the special pitch of each note is a key aspect of JMC: children gain a very good aural ability by the end of the course, often acquiring relative or perfect pitch.

(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 in the extension course. We find that children having lessons on a second instrument become happily bilingual!)

**Rhythm activities** During lessons children respond to the pulse or rhythm of the music, helping to develop more musical singing and playing performances. There are percussion rhythm ensembles from Book 2 onwards.

**Playing** consists of keyboard games, repertoire and ensembles. Keyboard games introduce new keyboard concepts in an enjoyable way, each game having a specific purpose.

**Repertoire** is the name given to the more substantial pieces that the children learn to play. Book 1 focuses on playing with both hands, but not together; hands together playing is introduced in Book 2. As all the playing work is the expression of preparatory listening and singing work, finding the correct note with the correct finger is not the main purpose; *how* the music is played is our goal.



**In the lesson** The parents' role in lessons is to support the child to respond directly to the teacher, and at home, to be a practising partner. We would encourage you to revisit things at home in a similar way to how they were presented in the lesson. Regular attendance is necessary to keep up with the class.

**Concerts** We hold an annual concert for the younger classes, where all children have the opportunity to play and sing together to family and friends. You are also warmly invited to attend the concerts for the more advanced students - by coming along to these, you will gain further insight into the progression of the courses...and your child will have something to aspire to!

