

Primary Directions in Music



Price: £26.95 per year group
Key Stage: KS1, KS2
Contact: www.fullchordmusic.co.uk
Reviewed by: Julie Puxley

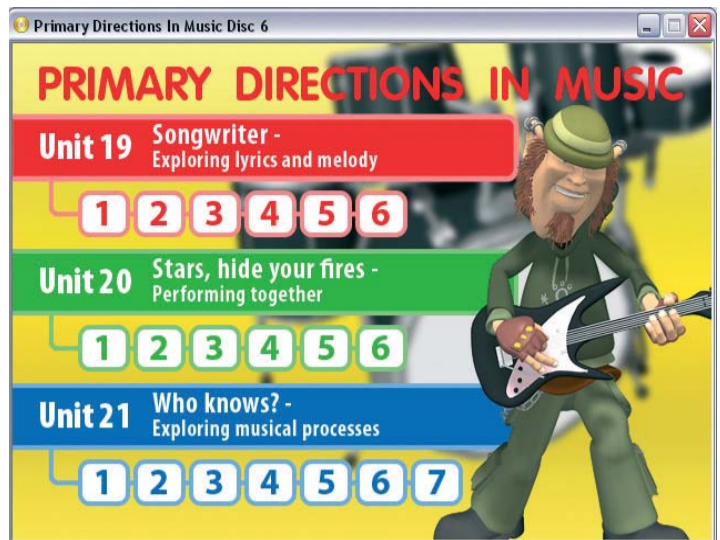
Primary Directions in Music provides a comprehensive series of interactive CD-ROMs which cover all QCA units in detail from Years 1-6 (a reception/early years resource will be available from September). Each disc includes lesson presentations, printable teaching and planning notes and children's worksheets. Classroom displays are also promised, although these are simply print-outs of the slide shows.

Lessons are ready to use; you literally put in the CD-ROM and get cracking. The resource combines animation, video clips and images with music to illustrate topics in a

comprehensive, fun and approachable way.

Accompanying teacher's notes provide thorough directions for each lesson along with suggestions for cross curricular themes. Most importantly, Primary Directions in Music decodes the QCA requirements for the non-music specialist.

I particularly liked how the resource encourages pupils to make music using real instruments. During the slide shows, tasks which involve the children using musical equipment are clearly identified and whole class performances are also encouraged.



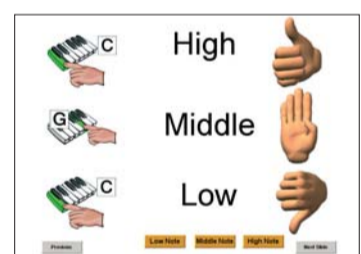
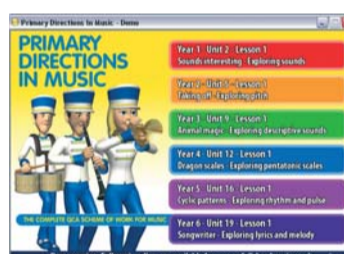
I tried Primary Directions in Music with my Year 4 class, who are following the 'Painting with Sounds' QCA unit. Before I was given the CD-ROM, I was dreading teaching this topic as it seemed I would be doing a lot of hard work. The activities outlined by the QCA suggested they we 'Look at a selection of pictures that give strong impressions of mood' and then 'Play the children music that describes an event, scene, person or animal'. This all sounded extremely difficult. I knew that I could create a lovely selection of images to show mood if I hunted for a couple of hours on the internet. Equally, I could raid my CD collection to find examples of music that described an event. However, I did not have hours of spare time to do this and was not completely convinced I knew what was actually required.

This is where Primary Directions in Music really came to my rescue as it allowed me to have a tailor made lesson that I knew covered the QCA requirements.

Our session began with some jolly audio to set the mood as the learning objectives were clearly outlined. The lesson notes explained that the children were about to listen to Pictures at an Exhibition by the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky. The piece is a musical description of walking around an exhibition of Hartman's paintings. Unfortunately, many of the original pictures no longer exist and Mussorgsky's music is all we have to remember them by.

As the music begins to play, the next slide shows an art gallery, which helps the children imagine what the composer was trying to express in his music. The children were really interested and commented that the music sounded like people walking around a gallery, staring at pictures.

I think the CD-ROM and slide show had really helped them to achieve the learning objective, which was to suggest how music describes images and moods.



VERDICT: INSTANT MUSIC LESSONS

If you are like me and want to spend your weekends doing something other than preparing for music lessons, these CD-ROMs are a great time-saving investment. You know that children are going to receive a comprehensive and interesting music lesson, which gives you time to go out and enjoy your own kind of music. Does anyone have change for the jukebox?!