

Around the World in Six Weeks: Musical Fusions

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Pupils studied a range of music from countries across the world including India, Jamaica and Ireland. They listened to the 'fingerprints' of each style of music and then explored how these traditional features had been used in popular music. Pupils then decided that they wanted to explore reggae music in greater detail and we based the composition topic around reggae music. Pupils were given a bank of reggae and dance beats as MIDI files and sequenced these into a piece of music using Music Creator.

All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the task, but the biggest response was from the Year 7 boys. They felt like this area of music was particularly their domain and they, arguably, gained the most from this project. Several boys took particular pride in using the software outside of lesson times in order to find out exactly what the software could do.

Along the way I learnt that the use of music technology in Key Stage 3 music lessons really allowed us to 'spice up' our programmes of study. This year we have kept our curriculum very current and this has been of the utmost benefit to students. For others attempting a similar project, make sure that the software is registered in advance of students using it. Immediately after installation pupils began using it and it took an entire lesson to make sure all copies of the software were registered. Students also carried out a 'blog' throughout the unit that allowed them to track their own progress which worked particularly well.