

Key Stage 2: The Place of Folk Dance in the Primary Physical Education Curriculum

This document gives an indication of how English folk dance can help teachers enhance and deliver aspects of the National Curriculum for PE in England at Key Stage 2 (ages 7 – 11) and suggests a range of supporting resources created by folk artist-educators.

This document refers to English folk dance which comprises social folk dancing: (ceilidh / country / barn dancing); and performance dance: (morris dancing; clog / step dance; maypole dancing; sword dancing - rapper sword and longsword).

There are many similarities with folk dancing from the rest of Britain and around the world.

Key Stage 2 PE Subject Content	Links to folk dance	
	Social folk dance <i>ceilidh / country / barn dance</i>	Performance dance <i>morris dancing; clog / step dance; maypole dancing, sword dancing</i>
Using basic moves in combination (Running, jumping, throwing and catching in isolation and in combination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social folk dance consists of constant travel in different directions and formations. Steps such as skipping, galloping and the running step are used to get from place to place. These transitional moves take place in a variety of forms such as circle dance, long ways sets and partner dances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most performance styles of folk dance use combinations of a running step (gentle, rhythmical jog), skipping, hopping and jumping as ways of travelling and changing direction. For example, a morris or clog dancer may dance three running steps followed with a hop (1,2,3, hop), this 'pattern' will be repeated to allow the dancer to travel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand movements – hand movements provide an additional layer of co-ordination development to the dances. For example, right and left hand turns with a partner, clapping sequences, holding hands in the air to create arches for others to dance underneath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morris stick dances include figures where sticks are thrown to other members of the team in time with the music – this requires very precise team work, coordination and listening skills.
Competitive Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social folk dancing requires elements of working together in pairs and larger groups or 'sets'. These sets take place in a variety of forms such as circles, squares and long lines. Social folk dance requires many attributes similar to that in competitive games such as, team work, team mentality, focus, positioning, repertoire, rehearsal, discipline and determination. These attributes are essential to ensure the dances are executed correctly and precisely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance styles of folk dance require teamwork and collaboration. Morris dances are generally performed in groups ('sides'). Clog dance can be performed as a team with simple choreography. Maypole dancing requires focussed team work to achieve patterns with the ribbons. Longsword and rapper sword dances are performed in teams of 5 or 6. Team work is vital as the dancers are connected together by holding the swords, letting go of the swords would mean the 'figure' could not work. Clog and rapper sword dance championship competitions can be found across the UK.

<p>Develop flexibility, strength, technique, control and balance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social folk dance requires technique, control and balance, particularly in dances where lots of spinning or turning takes place. This could be spinning/turning under the arm of a partner, performing a move called the 'basket' where a small group of dancers are tightly linked in a circle and spin quickly, or a 'swing' where two dancers link together (various holds) and spin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clog dance requires balance and co-ordination due to the rounded sole of the clog. Developing the ability to transfer the weight swiftly from one foot to the other also supports these elements though strengthening the core and leg muscles. • Clog dance requires speed, agility and precision. • Morris dance requires co-ordination of the hands and feet simultaneously (cross lateral movement) • Some forms of morris require agility, strength and balance to achieve height in the jumps/leaps and sometimes landing in a lunge position. • Longsword dances include figures where dancers step or jump over the swords which requires precision, balance and control.
<p>Perform dances using a range of movement patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social folk dances are made up from a series of sections which relate or connect to the music. Often referred to as an 'A' and 'B' part, occasionally a 'C' part. Different figures take place to each part of the music and once all sections have been completed, the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clog dance steps are made up of a combination of rhythmical movements (taps and beats) which are often repetitive. A competition dance would require the dancer to perform 6 steps, (10 steps for the championship). • Morris Dance uses various combinations of steps or moves to build

	<p>dance will begin again from the start.</p>	<p>a dance. As with social folk dance, these patterns are set to the music and will repeat numerous times, often beginning the dance with a new lead person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maypole Dancing consists of a variety of figures which produce different patterns with the ribbons.
<p>Take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social dancing is a very adaptable form of dance and can take place outdoors, it can work particularly well in the school playground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maypole, morris, clog and sword dances are traditionally performed outdoors often as part of processions, parades or festivals.
<p>Compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups, a task could be set for pupils to be creative with their dance, for example, they might begin to add some of their own personality and ideas to a traditional social folk dance. These new dances can be shared with peers and comparisons could be made on a technical, stylistic and artistic level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance styles usually comprise a series of steps which can be ordered/developed into a routine, these steps and routines can easily be developed into more challenging choreographed sequences as the dancers improve.

Learning Resources

EFDSS' award-winning Resource Bank provides freely downloadable materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts in your teaching and learning. The following resources support aspects of the primary dance curriculum at Key Stage 2:

A Song and a Dance: using folk arts in inclusive settings (simple songs and adapted dances for use with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/a-z/11979-a-song-and-a-dance-inclusive-folk>

An Acre of Land KS1 & KS2 (a song and accompanying dance) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/2528-efdss-resource-bank-an-acre-of-land>

An Introduction to Maypole Dances (sample dances, audio files, lesson plans for Years 1 – 6) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/10497-maypole-manual>

Beginners' Guide to English Folk Dance (video, accompanying PDF document) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/beginners-guides/37-english-folk-dance>

Ceilidh Band Project: five tunes & dances (audio files with tunes at practice speed and dance speed, PDF document containing instructions for five dances) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/5278-ceilidh-band-project>

Clog Workshop for Beginners (a video, made by the BBC in 2019 as part of their #DancePassion event, shows a 30-minute taster clog dance workshop for absolute beginners – suitable for children of most ages and abilities from approximately 7 years and above) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/10604-dancepassion-clogs>

Creative Folk Dance for Primary Schools by Barry Goodman (simple dances suitable for introducing figures and formations with musical notation) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/3013-creative-folk-dance-primary>

I Love English Folk Dance - youth folk dance showcase performance from U.Dance 2012 (10-minute film showing various folk dance styles) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/3324-i-love-english-folk-dance>

Morris Hey! (an introduction to morris dancing for young people) <https://www.efdss.org/70-resources/resources/morris-hey/10501-morris-hey-intro>

Swords and Stars: Rapper Sword Dance for Primary Schools (written notes, audio files, in depth teaching manual from the Full English project) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/4869-swords-and-stars>

Youth Ceilidh Dancing (short film) <https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/38-resources/resources/10140-youth-ceilidh-dancing>



At the English Folk Dance and Song Society, we champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

Our award-winning Resource Bank contains over 100 resources – incorporating hundreds of audio files, videos and supporting documents, all free to download. They offer endless practical ways to use folk song, music, dance, drama and more in all sorts of community settings, as well as in formal education.

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