'Music for Change' 2015-18

Enhancing the school readiness of children in challenging circumstances

FULL REPORT: 'Music for Change' 2015-16 & 2016-17

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1. Background

'Music for Change' set out to explore the impact of a specially devised programme of weekly music sessions on the all-round development of pre-school children in northwest Westminster, an area of multiple deprivation. Devised to meet specific needs identified by the local authority's Early Years Advisory Team, the project aims to improve children's school readiness and support above average numbers of children with speech, language and communication needs.

The three wards in which the project is located, Queen's Park, Westbourne and Harrow Road, are the most deprived in Westminster and situated in the 7th most deprived constituency in the UK. On average 41% of children in the area are eligible for Free School Meals and Queen's Park's Mozart Estate (25% of households) has consistently the worst level of child poverty in the UK. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index for 2015 places 33% of households in Queen's Park and Harrow Road, and 57% of households in Westbourne, in the most deprived 5% in the country.

Although school readiness levels are rising gradually, there remain above average numbers of children who do not achieve the required 'Good Level of Development' by the end of Reception, which is likely to have an impact on their ability to reach their potential at school and beyond. Almost a third of children across the locality are registered as having special educational needs (SEN) and an estimated 50% of children have some form of speech and language delay. More than 60% have English as an Additional Language (EAL); in some schools this rises to almost 100%.

2. Project format

The first two years of 'Music for Change' (2015-16 and 2016-17) saw five main strands of project delivery being supplemented with one new strand in the second year. These six elements were:

(i) Weekly musician-led workshops in 7 nurseries and 2 Children's Centres (Year 1), and 5 of the same nurseries and 1 Children's Centre (Year 2). These workshops gave children opportunities to explore and enhance their learning and development through creativity and music, and to continue their musical journeys. In four of the nurseries during Year 2 the musician was present for a full day per week, allowing them time to observe children as well as interact with children and staff in a more integrated way than is possible through shorter visits.

(ii) A 10-week co-delivery model involving our music leaders and NHS Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) took place 6 times across 4 nurseries in order to give staff new ideas and tools with which to support children with mild or emerging speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

(iii) CPD sessions for Early Years teachers and assistants (EYPs) were delivered locally or EYPs from multiple settings to attend, as well as in each setting where content was devised to meet setting staff's specific needs. A wide range of topics was covered relating to music in the curriculum in order to embed a more musical ethos in the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

(iv) Live performances in local venues, attended by groups of children from their nurseries, gave pupils (often their first) taste of live music and experience of different musical cultures and styles. Performances included a string quartet, Bangladeshi tabla and dance, new musical versions of 'The Ugly Duckling' and 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' (featuring trombone trio The Blowpipes); African songs and drumming; and immersive and interactive performances of Wonderful Beast's musical theatre pieces for under 3's 'Orla and the Sun' and 'Orla's Moon'.

(v) Research to assess the impact of the project by Professor Graham Welch (UCL Institute of Education) and Professor Adam Ockelford (University of Roehampton). Professor Welch evaluated the collaboration with SLTs, and Professor Ockelford evaluated musical progression and learning development across areas of the EYFS.

(vi) (Year 2 only) A research trial to explore how a music intervention, which focussed on music with as little additional language as possible, with children aged 3-4 years in a nursery school setting could impact on Executive Function, which comprises the skills of working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility – seen as the building blocks of learning and achievement. This was delivered in two 8-week phases, and involved the delivery of an art project with some of the children (as a 'control' activity).

Performance of 'Orla and the Sun', June 2016

"*[The concerts were] fantastic. Children really enjoyed them – they talked about them to their parents and to other children in the nursery. It is so important for the children to experience live music by real musicians, and coming out of the setting to somewhere new to experience music for the first time*" (nursery head). "*[Our] children are never exposed to live music otherwise. Half of children have never seen an instrument*" (nursery teacher).

3. Activities and approach

Our approach and method evolved over the two year period, especially as our learning increased from the collaboration with SLTs and with better knowledge of the settings and their staff. One key change in year 2 was to reduce the number of participant nursery settings and to offer a full day of musician input, rather than hour-long sessions. This enabled the music leader to become more embedded in the setting infrastructure, and be regarded by staff as more integral to the teaching team.

The approach we took included the following adult-led elements:

- Vocal play
- Singing
- Using instruments
- Musical games
- Listening and aural discrimination games
- Movement and music
- Songs and stories

'Free play' – in which children are free to play with items of their choice in whatever way they want, and adult interaction is entirely led by the child – was a key element of every session, especially when the music practitioner was present in the setting for a whole-day. These parts of the sessions typically consisted of:

- Rhythm, patterning, timbre and sound in play with toys
- Music and mark making
- Music and dancing
- 1-1 musical interactions with instruments
- 1-1 vocal interactions
- Spontaneous small group singing
- Spontaneous music-making with instruments in small groups
- Creating musical environments both indoors and outdoors
- Exploring a song box in free play

Our Creative Producer noticed that the children engaged in music-making frequently exhibited 'Observable Indicators of Flow' (Custodero, 2005), for example:

- ***Self-assignment*** – children had significant opportunities to do this in play when adults followed their lead but individual children could also show which activities they would like to do in whole-group music-making e.g. by starting to sing songs; by picking up certain props and demonstrating actions with them; or by playing in particular ways when they picked up instruments.

- ***Self-correction*** – children were invested in the rules of games and, through repetitions of activities, could correct themselves. E.g. children at one nursery started by bouncing the flames off a lycra sheet throughout the "Volcano Song"; however, after various repetitions they could be seen waiting, pulsing the lycra first, before bouncing the flames into the air at the "right" moment as they sang "kapow".

- ***Gesture*** – children used focused and controlled quality of movement, e.g. when listening to music and doing a firework dance with scarves.

- ***Anticipation*** – children demonstrated anticipation of what comes next in an activity and also in a session. Where they were familiar with the structure and activities in a group session they could often be observed starting activities themselves based on knowing what normally came next. The 'cue' may be seeing a particular instrument or prop, or hearing a short excerpt of a particular song. E.g. Child S saw the musician tap two fingers together and immediately started singing "Que Llueva".

- ***Expansion*** – children would make activities more challenging by changing lyrics, associated actions, or musical features. At one nursery, Child I participated in singing the "Hammer Song" before then instigating a second singing, this time sung in double time.

- ***Extension*** – spending all day in the setting meant that music practitioner had time to engage in free play with children and observe how children continued activities from group music-making in their play. E.g. Child C used the "Counting Song" in play when counting toy cars; and Child A took a small xylophone off to a homemade den under a climbing frame to play.

4. Outputs and participant numbers

In Year 1 we worked in:

9 settings in Westminster: 2 primary school nurseries; 2 maintained nurseries; 3 PVIs; and 2 Children's Centres.

Approximately **680 children**, of which 140 were aged 0-2 years; 190 aged 2-3 years (e.g. as part of the "2 Year Offer"); and 350 were aged 3-4 years.

We delivered **487 half-day workshop sessions**, working with 9 different musicians; as well as 12 CPD sessions and 4 live concerts.

In year 2 we worked in:

10 settings of which 9 are in Westminster and 1 in Hammersmith & Fulham

3 of the settings are primary schools with nurseries; 2 are maintained nurseries; 4 are PVIs; operated by London Early Years Foundation (LEYF); and 1 is a Children's Centre.

Approximately **640 children**, of which 146 were aged 0-2 years; 121 aged 2-3 years (e.g. as part of the "2 Year Offer"); and 363 were aged 3-4 years.

We delivered **384 half-day workshop sessions**, working with 9 different musicians; as well as 6 CPD sessions and 3 live concerts.

In Total from September 2015 to July 2017:

11 settings **1,320 children**

871 workshop sessions **7 concerts & 18 CPD sessions**

5. Reporting against our outcomes

We set three outcomes for the project:

i) To enhance children's early musical awareness and development.

ii) To enhance the personal, social and emotional development of children aged <5 years in challenging circumstances.

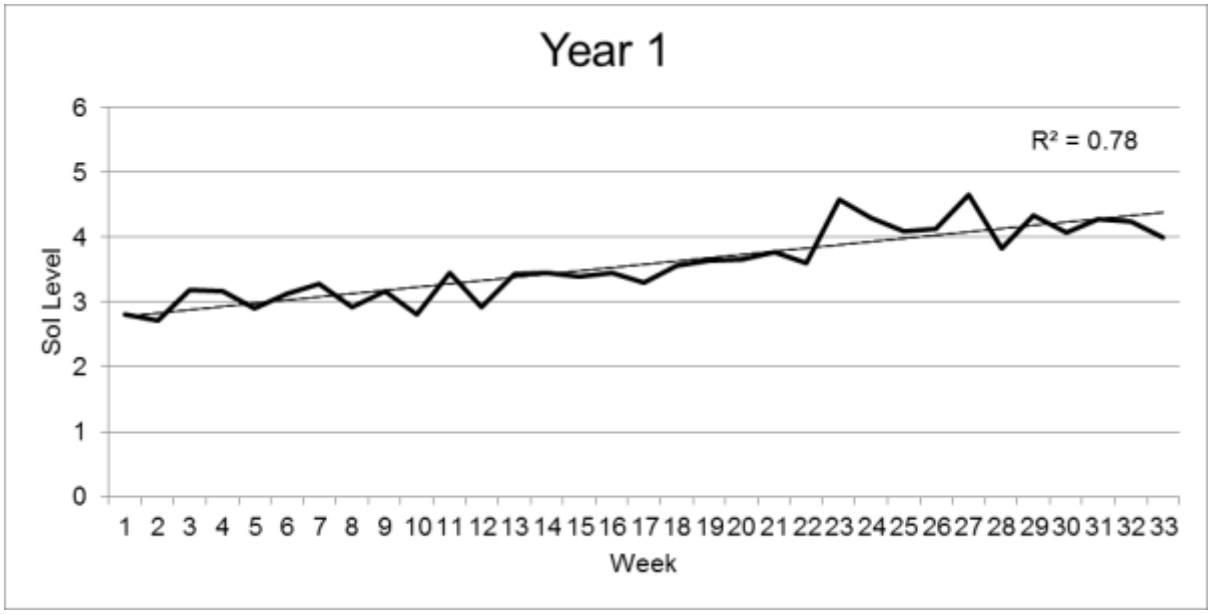
iii) To increase the capacity of music practitioners and early years professionals to support young children's speech and language development through music-making.

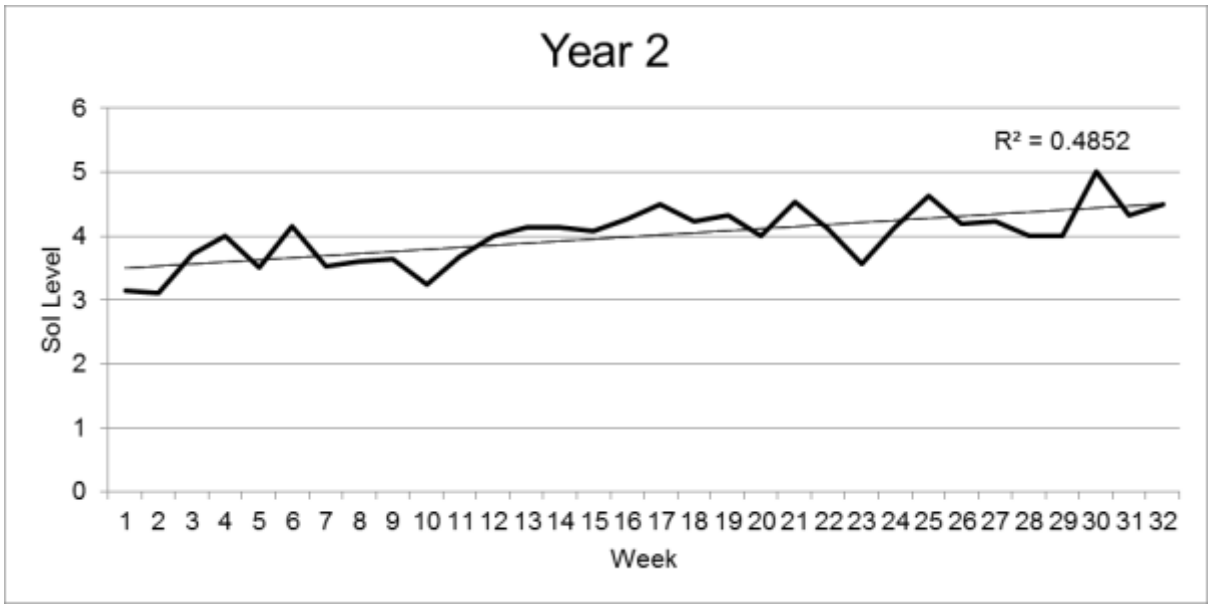
5.i Enhancing children's early musical awareness and development

Our observations record that children developed better use of the timbres, pitches, and dynamics of their voice, as well as using a range of phonics descriptively in warm-ups and exercises, or together with the movement of scarves, lycra and scrunchies. Known songs and songs with actions were adapted and extended through incorporating opportunities for children's suggestions, eg starting, stopping, tempo, dynamics, pitch, character voices, mood voices, body percussion, and other lyric substitutions etc.

We used Sounds of Intent in the Early Years (SoI-EY) to track the musical development of more than 50 case study children over both years of the project, and engaged Professor Adam Ockelford (University of Roehampton), who led on devising Sounds of Intent, to analyse and interpret our data. We also gathered reflections on children's musical progression over the course of the project from our music leaders, Creative Producer and school staff.

Below is an extract from the report by Professor Ockelford into the musical progression of our case study children over the course of the two years:





"In Year 1, children's mean starting level was around 2.8 and they ended at around 4.4, which amounts to 1.6 SoI-EY levels difference. In Year 2, the mean starting level was rather higher, at 3.6, and the ending level was 4.6 (allowing for the fact that the intervention lasted one week less than in Year 1); a difference of 1.0 SoI-EY level. The possible reason for this is the age difference between the two cohorts (see below). Over the two years, the mean starting level was 3.1 and the ending level 4.4; a difference of 1.3 SoI-EY levels.

To put this in context, according to the Voyajolu and Ockelford (2016)[1], over a period of 33 weeks, a child starting at SoI-EY level 2.8 would be expected, *ceteris paribus*, to move to 3.4 through natural maturation (a shift of 0.6 of a SoI-EY level). A child starting at level 3.6 would be expected to move to 4.0 through natural maturation (a difference of 0.4). Hence, we can reasonably attribute a shift of 1.0 level to the musical intervention in Year 1 and 0.6 in Year 2. Consolidating the data from Years 1 and 2, we would expect natural maturation to account for 0.5 of a SoI-EY level. Hence we can reasonably attribute a shift of 0.8 SoI-EY to the interventions taken together.

Further analyses can be undertaken in terms of 'age-related expectations' (or 'ARE' to use the terminology of the Early Years Foundation Stage).

With regard to Year 1, we would expect children to be at SoI-EY level 2.8 around the age of 8 months, and around level 4.4 at the age of 47 months (Voyajolu and Ockelford, *ibid.*). The mean age of the children at the onset of the 33-week intervention was in fact 39 months (and at the end, 46 months). In terms of expected SoI-EY levels, these ages correspond to 4.1 and 4.3 respectively (a change of 0.2 of a level). In lay terms, these data imply that:

a) the children in the study began the Year 1 intervention at the age of 3 years 3 months, and were, according to the baseline assessments that were made, very significantly behind musical ARE (SoI-EY level 2.8 rather than 4.1);

b) the Year 1 intervention meant that their musical development accelerated considerably, moving to a music-developmental age that was slightly (though not statistically significantly) ahead of musical ARE (0.1 of a SoI-EY level).

With regard to Year 2, we would expect children to be at SoI-EY level 3.6 around the age of 20 months, and around level 4.6 at 48 months. The mean age of the children at the onset of the 32-week was in fact 42 months (and at the end, 49 months). In terms of expected SoI-EY levels, these ages correspond to 4.5 and 4.6 respectively (a

[1] Angela Voyajolu and Adam Ockelford (2016) '*Sounds of Intent in the Early Years*: A proposed framework of young children's musical development' *Research Studies in Music Education*, 38(1), 93–113.

change of 0.1 of a SoI-EY level). In lay terms, these data imply that:

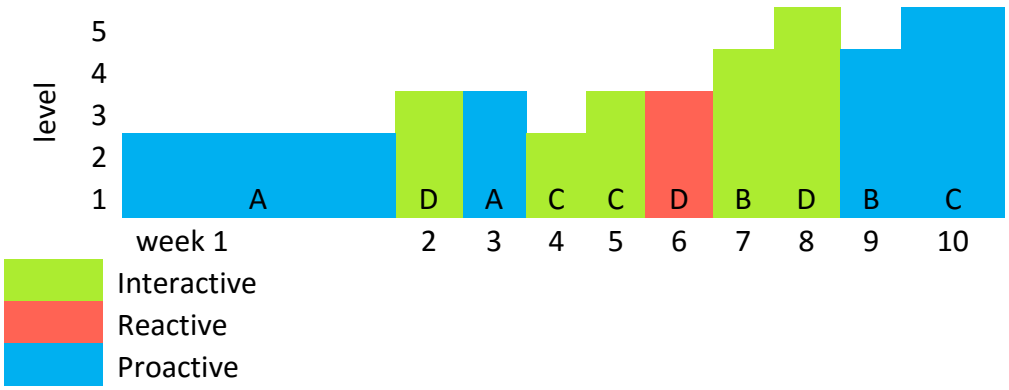
a) the children in the study began the Year 2 intervention at the age of 3 years 6 months, and were, according to the baseline assessments that were made, very significantly behind musical ARE (SoI-EY level 3.6 rather than 4.5);

b) the Year 2 intervention meant that their musical development accelerated considerably, moving to a music-developmental age that was slightly (though not statistically significantly) behind musical ARE (0.1 of a SoI-EY level)."

(Ockelford, 2017)

Below is an example visualisation of SoI-EY for one child showing their musical progression. This also highlights the non-linear nature of learning, engagement and progression typical of children of this age-group.

Child "V" - steady progression in both Proactive and Interactive domains



"*They're making up their own music, their own songs: that's something that I haven't heard them do [before]. And because we've got the instruments in the room [now] they're actually sitting down in groups of 3 or 4 playing different instruments but all singing the same song*" (Early Years Professional)

"*M played my ukulele with great skill and obvious enjoyment. She asked what the knobs at the end did – I told her to try it, so she turned one of them which altered the tuning of one string. She then played it again and said "Oh, it's turned it spooky". We then wrote a spooky song together which she was able to play along to in time.*" (CF Music Practitioner)

Our seven performances were very positively received by children, staff who accompanied them, and some parents who attended with younger children too. After attending a performance of Orla's Moon, EYPs and children at nursery M were so enthused that they taught themselves 3 of the songs (using a CD they were given) to perform at their end of year party for parents.

"It was very child centred but had opportunities for adults to join in too. It's given us ideas of how we could do a story with props; … about using songs in other ways" (Nursery teacher)

"The concerts are one of the best things. A lot of our children will not have experienced going to a concert or going to the theatre." (Nursery manager)

"Brilliant. My daughter has never sat still so entranced for that long." (parent of 2 year-old)

5.ii Enhancing children's personal, social and emotional development

We collected data through reporting by teachers using a tool lent to us by music charity Soundabout and analysed for us by Professor Ockelford for tracking age-related progress in key areas of the EYFS, in addition to observations from researchers and staff.

EYPs and centre managers have reported particularly positive impacts on children's personal, social and emotional (PSE) development:

"Children who were shy have come out of their shell [and become] involved in a bigger group. Social Emotional development has improved. Children are now visibly volunteering to take part – they are socialising and interacting" (nursery manager).

We looked at age-related development in three relevant areas: self-confidence, managing feelings, and making relationships. In all of these there was an improvement over the duration

of the project higher than the usual age-related increase, although it cannot be proved that the music programme caused this increase:

Self-confidence and self-awareness: +1 month (year 2)

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	43	46	51	51	0
Year 2	42	39	49	45	46	1
Years 1&2	40	41	47	48	49	1

In Years 1 & 2, children's levels of self-confidence and self-awareness rose, in developmental terms, from 41 months to 49 months. Had their levels of self-confidence and self-awareness continued to develop at the same rate as before, they would only have risen to 48 months. Hence, across both cohorts, development accelerated on average by one month. Hence it may be that the music sessions had a positive impact on children's levels of self-confidence and self-awareness.

Managing feelings and behaviour: +4 months (year 1)

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	38	46	45	49	4
Year 2	42	39	49	45	46	1
Years 1&2	40	39	47	46	48	2

In Year 1, children's ability to manage their feelings and behaviour rose, in developmental terms, from 38 months to 49 months according to the EYFs 'norms'. Had their levels of managing feelings and behaviour continued to develop at the same rate as before, it would only have risen to 45 months. Hence in the intervention period, development accelerated by four months. So it may be that the music sessions had a significant positive impact on the children's capacity to manage their feelings and behaviour.

In Year 2, children's ability to manage their feelings and behaviour rose, in developmental terms, from 39 months to 46 months, which represents an acceleration of one month. So it may be that the music sessions had a positive impact on the children's ability to manage their feelings and behaviour.

Making relationships: +1 month

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	41	46	48	49	1
Year 2	42	39	49	45	46	1
Years 1&2	40	40	47	47	48	1

In Years 1 & 2, children's level of being able to make relationships rose, in developmental terms, from 40 months to 48 months. Had their level of being able to make relationships continued to develop at the same rate as before, they would only have risen to 47 months. Hence, across both cohorts, development accelerated on average by one month. Hence it may well be that the music sessions had a positive impact on children's level of being able to make relationships. (Ockelford, 2017)

Observations by the Creative Futures staff team and from setting staff reinforces the finding that the project has had a very positive impact on many of the children, boosting their level of interaction, sociability, group-work and self-confidence.

"*M is generally very quiet and keeps to himself on nursery floor, but he opens up in music sessions and free play musical interactions. When he first started attending sessions, he would observe rather than sing out loud. He eventually offered physical interactions with mouthing and playing instruments, and now he sings and is enthusiastic when he wants to take a turn*" (CF Music Practitioner).

"He*'s quite a shy person and doesn't like being the centre of attention or having attention drawn to him but doing the project he's really come out of his shell, he just really joins in, he's much happier, much more extrovert and really comes out of his comfort zone.*" (EYP, of the same child)

"*Children have demonstrated their development in confidence as they move from being passive observers to active participants, joining in with the actions to songs and familiar tunes and songs.*" (Children's Centre manager)

"*Children have demonstrated their development in confidence as they move from being passive observers to active participants, joining in with the actions to songs and familiar tunes and songs.*" (Children's Centre manager)

5.iii Increasing the capacity of music practitioners and EYPs to support children's speech and language development through music-making.

Against this outcome we have looked both at children's development in areas of speech, language and communication (SLC) and at EYPs professional development in terms of supporting children's language development and wider curriculum enrichment through music. A key element in meeting this outcome was the collaboration with NHS Speech and Language Therapists, which will be explored in more detail in section (6) below.

We have tracked this outcome through looking at children's progress against areas of the EYFS (with input from Professor Ockelford), through a process evaluation of the collaboration with NHS SLTs (undertaken by Professor Graham Welch and Alice Bowmer), and through observations and reports from our Creative Producer and from EYPs themselves.

First, here is the report on children's progress in areas linked to literacy:

Listening and Attention: +3 months (year 1)

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	40	46	47	50	3
Year 2	42	42	49	49	49	0
Years 1&2	40	41	47	48	50	2

In Year 1, children's levels of listening and attention rose, in developmental terms, from 40 months to 50 months according to the EYFs 'norms'. Had their levels of listening and attention continued to develop at the same rate as before, it would only have risen to 47 months. Hence in Year 1, development accelerated by three months. So it may be that the music sessions had a positive impact on the children's listening and attention.

In Year 2, children's levels of listening and attention rose, in developmental terms, from 42 months to 49 months, which, *ceteris paribus*, is to be expected.

Speaking: +4 months (year 2)

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	41	46	48	49	1
Year 2	42	36	49	42	46	4
Years 1&2	40	39	47	45	48	3

In Year 1, the children's level of speaking rose, in developmental terms, from 41 months to 49 months according to the EYFs 'norms'. Had their levels of speaking continued to develop at the same rate as before, it would only have risen to 48 months. Hence in the intervention period, development accelerated by one month. It may be that the music sessions had a slight but positive impact on levels of speaking.

In Year 2, children's level of speaking rose, in developmental terms, from 36 months to 46 months, which represents an acceleration of four months. So it may be that the music sessions had a positive impact on the children's speaking.

Understanding: +2 months (year 2)

	Mean baseline chronological age (months)	Mean baseline developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention chronological age (months)	Mean post-intervention **predicted** developmental age (months)	Mean post-intervention **measured** developmental age (months)	Difference between predicted and measured developmental age (months)
Year 1	39	42	46	50	50	0
Year 2	42	39	49	46	48	2
Years 1&2	40	41	47	48	49	1

In Year 1, the children's level of understanding rose, in developmental terms, from 42 months to 50 months according to the EYFs 'norms'. This is what would have been anticipated. Hence it appears that the music intervention did not have any particular impact on the children's level of understanding.

In Year 2, children's level of understanding rose, in developmental terms, from 39 months to 48 months, which represents an acceleration of two months. So it may be that the music sessions had a positive impact on the children's understanding.

(Ockelford, 2017)

Staff also reported significant impacts on their pupils throughout the project:

"*We've got a selective mute and she got involved and I hear her singing and humming the tune*" (EYP)

"*We had a high proportion of children with SLCN, this has really helped their confidence, vocabulary and listening and attention.*" (Nursery Manager)

"J came to with almost no speech and struggled with behaviour. Aged 2.5, he was able to join in with the rhythms of particular songs and reproduce them, albeit with unclear language. He was one of the strongest at identifying different sounds, and was so confident

about his answers that he tried to speak in front of the whole group, for one of the first times ever." (CF Music Practitioner)

We can report positive impacts on Early Years staff too:

"*The staff seem more aware of children's musicality and music making. When we had time to talk the conversations were thoughtful, reflective and meaningful. All three practitioners are gradually developing their music provision through creating musical spaces, developing the repertoire of songs and providing planned music sessions.*" (CF Music Practitioner)

All nursery managers of participating settings reported that the lead EYP involved in the project was now more confident in leading music activity; most reported that this had filtered through to other staff too.

Scoring out of 5, where 1 is 'no change' and 5 is 'significant change', setting managers reported that the project had had a positive impact on their staff's

- knowledge of musical development in young children: (scoring on average 4.5/5)
- planning and leading of music sessions: (scoring on average 4.5/5); and
- understanding of how music can support children's speech and language development: (scoring on average 4.25/5)

6. Collaboration with NHS Speech & Language Therapists

The collaboration with SLTs was significant in terms of cross sector collaboration, shared learning among both music leaders and SLTs, and positive impact on aspects of teaching practice by nursery staff. We delivered more than 50 sessions together over the 2 years, across 4 nursery settings, exploring a variety of delivery models.

All sessions followed a standard format whereby the lead EYP, Musician, and SLT met for 20 minutes before the session started to plan together, delivered a session of 50-60 minutes with the children, then spent 20 minutes after the session reflecting on what had happened, what worked best or less well, and setting gap tasks for the EYP to do during the week prior to the next session.

Each workshop with the children followed an established format devised through various trials. A book was selected by the nursery for use across each 5 week segment, and to provide a thematic and linguistic focus. Free-play started the session, with items relating to the book placed around the room in order to link creative play to the themes of the rest of the session. Music leader, SLT and EYP interacted on an individual level with children, following their lead thus enabling a child-led environment. A large scrunchy was used to draw the free-play to a close and create a circle for the more structured part of the session which followed a visual timetable. A reading of the chosen book formed the focus of each session, with keywords (identified by the SLT or EYP) emphasised and explored, and musical activities enriching the exploration of language and embellishing the narrative (e.g. through creating songs for sections of the book, or soundscapes).

All settings received at least one batch of 8-10 workshops. Some repeated the programme, or had a shorter 'refresher' model. Two different SLTs were involved, and 3 CF music practitioners.

The collaboration was evaluated by Professor Welch (UCL Institute of Education) and Alice Bowmer. Here are extracts from their full report, "'Music for Change' – An action-research, two-year, multidisciplinary collaboration between musicians and Speech and Language Therapists" (Welch & Bowmer, 2017):

> Change was … evident in the ways that the charity Creative Futures developed the MfC programme across the five terms (Spring 2016 to Summer 2017). Initially, the design required the two visiting experts to lead the MfC sessions each week, whilst always ensuring

that the local nursery staff took an active part alongside their children. The experts provided mentored opportunities for the staff to 'lead' on particular elements, such as a rhythm game, song, or shared reading of the focus book (common elements of the programme). In this first two terms of the iteration of the MfC programme the intention was that the local nursery staff would, by the final session, have had sufficient 'taster' experience across the term to be able to lead the whole of the final session, supported (as needed) by the two experts.

This overall approach was endorsed in our research findings from the 2016 evaluation report (Welch & Bowmer, 2016). 'Demonstrable musical and linguistic pedagogical knowledge and skills were evident in the final session at each nursery setting from each of the participant nursery school staff in each school. During this final session, nursery staff members were observed to be able to lead activities, based on their participant observation of mentored expertise in the preceding weeks. They were observed, with various degrees of confidence, to use their own voices musically and positively to promote children's communication and musical skills, knowledge and understanding. There was an impressive range of musical repertoire evidenced, such as by the four members of staff (three assistants and one teacher) at Katharine Bruce. Similar competency was evidenced at Queen's Park, although the context was different as the assistant was working on her own with the two specialists' (pp7-8).

In the second year (2016-2017), the staff development component of the MfC programme design was changed to enable the nursery staff to lead sessions from the beginning, following an initial detailed briefing and example session by the two experts. The experts continued to participate in each session, being prepared to take a lead if they perceived this as being necessary in order to maintain the momentum of the activities, or if any of the nursery staff appeared hesitant or less confident at any given moment. The expert team also encouraged the nursery staff to decide on the nature and sequence of activities in advance by negotiating that week's content from a common MfC menu that had evolved successfully over the previous weeks and terms.

As might be expected, this alternate approach in which the nursery practitioners were leading from the start of the weekly sessions presented challenges to some concerning their confidence and skills. Nevertheless, with regular sustained expert support (before, during and after the sessions), there was evidence that the local staff

were able to draw on their basic craft knowledge and understanding of the children, allied to comfortable professional adult-child relationships, to offer successful music-led programmes. For example, nursery staff were encouraged and able to read (and tell) the term's focus story, using their inside knowledge to encourage children to join in at key points in the narrative and highlighting such moments with exaggerated vocal gestures. They also often demonstrated a sound knowledge of children's songs that they could use.

Impact on nursery staff:

Nursery staff demonstrated a developing awareness of the knowledge, understanding and skills related to their growing musical, linguistic and pedagogical abilities. This was seen through conscious staff decision making, both prior to and during sessions, such as stopping at varying points of a book reading activity when it was noted that the children's attention was waning.

Nursery staff reflections on the project included, "At first I thought the sessions would be too long to hold the children's attention, but the way that we did it kept everything moving and actually then the time just suddenly went!" At the second nursery staff noted that their conception of ideas within the project had changed, for example, of how to use stories to support development of language and music. They also reported that having the MfC framework had helped to provide a structure that can now be owned and extended in their future practice.

There was a range of positive evidence of impact of mentoring on nursery staff. For example, in session seven of the Summer term, the nursery staff member playing the role of session supporter was seen to adapt her own practice in response to what she observed as happening during the session. She was then able to acknowledge this during the post session meeting and suggest development ideas for her and her colleague to follow the children's lead on something that she had noticed during a session activity. Meanwhile, the lead nursery staff member became more confident in her own abilities to the point that she was able to improvise words and a musical melody around the theme of the session's book whilst her colleague strummed a guitar.

The programme was also most effective when the participant nursery staff were able to attend both pre- and post-session discussions. This enabled the experts to provide suitable guidance, reminders and encouragement beforehand, and to celebrate successes and discuss challenges in a reflective manner afterwards.

There was also evidence of greater personal impact where nursery staff took it upon themselves to practise all or some of the programme in between the formal sessions.

Impact on children:

Examples of the project's impact were also noted at the individual child level in both nurseries. One child would not participate in the whole group activity at all during session one, but — with support from the staff — was able to participate in some elements by session three, and sat and joined in with the majority of the group during sessions six and seven. An example from the other nursery was seen in the quality of communication between children. Two children who were silent during sessions one and two began to explore the pitch and dynamic ranges of their voice as the project progressed, with one beginning to join in by singing parts of songs by the final two sessions.

Children's engagement during sessions was observed to be almost always on-task, with moments of high level of collective group activity. For example, when nursery staff led an activity based on book 'The Gruffalo', children moved around the room to a collective pulse, making sounds and actions to illustrate the variety of the different animals being explored in the story. Supported by staff, the animal choices were the children's own and all were actively engaged for the entire activity, which lasted five minutes.

Children's ownership of the MfC programme was observed during both terms, particularly as children became familiar with the sessions' underlying structure. Children were often observed to, without prompting, tell the practitioners what was going to happen next. For example, during session five of the Summer term, one child (correctly) began to sing "shake and stop" at the end of the previous activity in preparation for what was coming next. Occasionally, children were observed to recount collaboratively the whole structure of the day's session before it had even begun: Child

1: "First, we say hello!", child two: "Then it's the ball", child 1: "Then we read the book"…
Children even complained if an established session element was missing, such as with one saying during session six: "A., we forgot 'Who's in the window?'".

Overall findings:

There was clear evidence that nursery staff had been successfully engaged in the MfC project and were able to enact a structured sequence of activities with their children. There was evidence of good pace across the final sessions, children were on-task and there were a wide range of musical and language inputs and outcomes. The nursery staff were also able to present a confident vocal model in their activities with the children and, when most successful, allowed appropriate time for the children themselves to contribute, to express their own voices, individually and collectively and to own the content.

Each nursery setting provided evidence of the positive impact of the MfC programme on all participants, nursery staff, children, managers and experts. In particular, the nursery staff were seen to be empowered by the programme to expand their repertoire of behaviours and activities with the children, and to reflect explicitly on how participation in the programme had developed them in their school roles.

(Welch & Bowmer, 2017)

Both music leaders and SLTs also reported learning and professional development through the collaboration. Examples of new skills include,

For music leaders:

- Using "OWL" – Observe, Wait, Listen (an NHS approach to developing child-centred communication skills)
- Using dialogic reading, helping to ensure children understand the text being used
- Animating the reading of a text by emphasising key words (identified in advance) through exaggerated inflection, timbre and rhythm.
- Using the visual timetable to give familiar structure to each session

- Using the Speech and Language Pyramid as a reference point, and ensuring that the content of each session is such that children can engage with it whatever their skill level on the Pyramid:

For SLTs:

- Pitching songs at the right level for children to sing easily.
- Valuing children's spontaneous singing
- Developing auditory discrimination by using different rhythms
- Using improvised songs to narrate children's play, and wherever possible

7. Executive Function trial

Creative Futures, in consultation with a number of research colleagues both in the UK and the US, undertook a pilot control trial with children aged 3-4 years in a primary school nursery to

explore the impact of a structured 'music and movement' programme on executive function skills. The rationale behind this was both the evidence that executive function skills are a predictor of later academic achievement, and emerging evidence that music can impact on areas of executive function.

Our trial took place at a primary school in west London, with a typically diverse population including at least 40% of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), 10% with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and a further 20% with speech and language developmental delay or social delay.

The research evaluation was conducted by Alice Bowmer and Dr Kathryn Mason, and overseen by Professor Graham Welch from the UCL Institute of Education.

50 children took part in the trial, split into groups and activities as follows:

Trial format

Group	Spring Term (Jan-Mar 2017)	Summer Term (Apr-Jun 2017)
A	Music Intervention (i)	More Music Intervention (ii)
B	Nothing: nursery as usual	Music Intervention (i)
C	Nothing: nursery as usual	Control activity (art)

Both 8-week music interventions focussed on music activities with minimal language (i.e. there were few songs with words, and instructions were given as often as possible visually or musically rather than verbally), so that the effects of a language itself (closely linked to executive function skills) could be removed from any potential impact.

Results

Full results and analysis of the trial will be published by the researchers in a more detailed article in due course. The headline findings were:

- In study one (i.e. the first 8-week intervention) we found that our music intervention group showed a significantly greater improvement than the control group in the complex planning task, 'Tower of London'.

- The music group also show a large improvement in their 'peg tapping' scores when compared to control, and while this isn't significant, the raw data trend seems to suggest that the music intervention may have had an impact in this test which assesses skills in inhibitory control.

- Looking at the raw data in study two (i.e. the second 8-week intervention), the 2 terms of music group (Group A) show a slight trend towards greater improvement on four of the Executive Function tests: 'Spin the Pots' (working memory skills), 'Trucks', 'Dimensional Change Card Sort' (both for cognitive flexibility) and 'Baby Stroop' (inhibitory control). It seems that a greater quantity of intervention helped to show an effect in these tasks. Whilst there was a trend for children who had two terms of music to show greater improvement on the tasks, none are statistically significant. However, the study was over a relatively short period of time and with only one session of music per week, and some children missed some sessions.

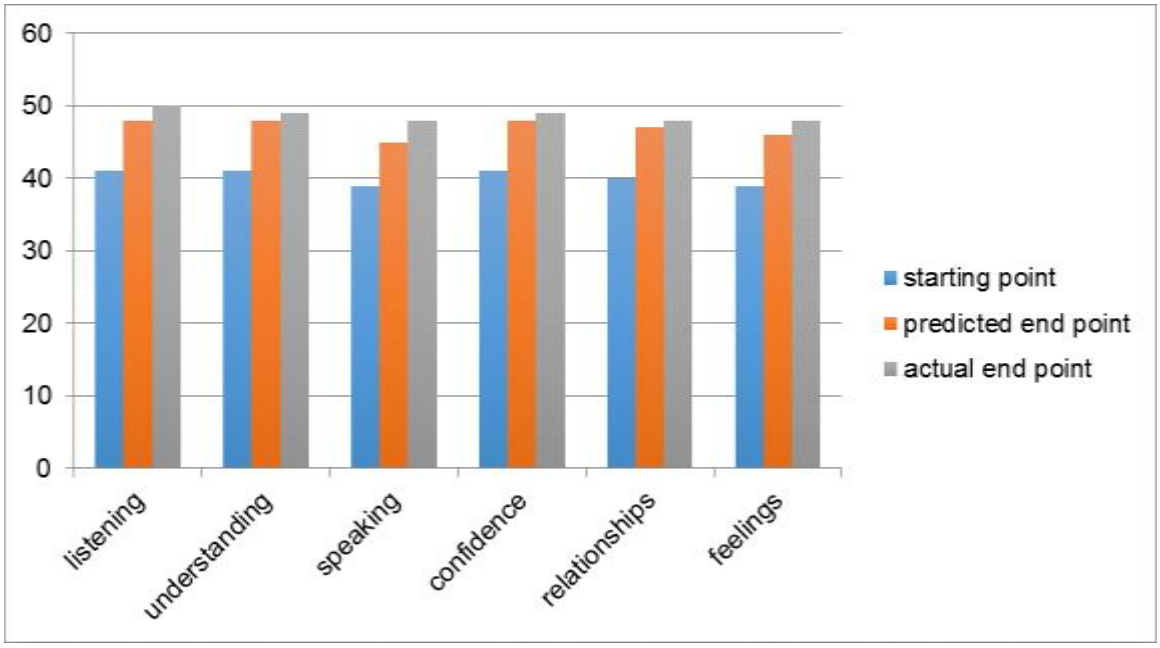
These findings are encouraging, especially when considering the short length of the intervention itself – just 45 minutes of music a week over 8 weeks. It forms a useful first step in an exploration of the impact that music could have on executive function in young children, and a sound basis upon which to undertake further trials, which we will do in continued collaboration with research colleagues in the UK and US.

8. Conclusion and next steps

Creative Futures' *Music for Change* programme has delivered positive and enriching experiences for more than a thousand children in one of the most deprived part of London.

The range of activities and performances has clearly impacted positively on many of those involved, not only children but also their teachers and assistants, our own music leaders, and on other professionals involved such as SLTs. Not only have many children attended a musical performance, or taken part in high quality music-making, for the first time, but shy children have become more confident, language skills have improved, social and emotional interaction has been enhanced, and the workforce has been inspired to try new approaches.

As can be seen in the graph below (Ockelford, 2017), children's development in all areas has been supported and strengthened:



"With hindsight, the emphasis on 'change' in the title of the programme (MfC) appears to be particularly apposite, in that it speaks to the multiple ways in which the programme operated and its ripple effects – potential and actual. An immediate, direct change was enacted through a series of staff development activities for each nursery in which the leadership and team members had first-hand experience of how their children's SLCN could be addressed through music. Change was also evident as the MfC programme was rolled out across the two years in different nurseries. Through participant observation and reflection, the expert specialists evolved the principles of the MfC programme to be both flexibly responsive to the needs of the local nursery team, such as by making minor adaptions if needed from week-to-week in order to ensure a sense of positive momentum across each term, and also by learning from observations of 'what worked' to evolve the MfC programme over time."

(Welch & Bowmer, 2017)

What next

The third year of Music for Change, from 2017-18, will see a shift from intensive delivery to legacy-building and support. In settings where we have been working for two years we are hoping and expecting to see that many of the underlying principles of our approach and method will have been transferred to setting staff, and embedded in teaching practice and the

culture of the setting. We will be offering each setting a bespoke package of support including CPD for staff, refresher sessions, in-setting modelling activities as well as guest musician visits and concert performances. In addition, we will be trialling a new phase of Speech, Language and Communication-focussed activity in three settings which builds on the collaboration with SLTs, but which is delivered entirely by a specially trained music leader.

Meanwhile, we are exploring a number of new strands of work to scale-up this programme to the wider early years sector through new partnerships and funding, building on what we have learned so far. These plans include the replication of the 10-week SLC-focussed project to numerous nursery groups across and beyond London; working with children and their parents to transfer music-making to the home; and developing a raft of new online resources and tools for teachers, EYPs, music practitioners and parents.

Music for Change has demonstrated the importance of music within the context of the early years: its ability to empower and enable teachers, its power to reduce inhibition and build the confidence of young children, and its ability to support learning and development across all areas of the EYFS. Our vision is to share what we have learned as widely as possible, to use the evidence we have gathered to strengthen the case for more arts and music in the early years, and to expand our programmes to reach more children.

9. Partners, funders and acknowledgements

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