



## **MOPS Take 2 - Term 3 Music Matters @ MOPS**

### **KEY**

**ML:** Music Leader

**LS:** Little Star Group Music Sessions

**KW:** Key Worker

The Term 3 report was completed by Kath Borer (Project Leader and ML) and reviewed by Kirsty Mees (Evaluation Officer)

### **OVERALL AIMS**

**For MOPS SEN/D children to engage & grow with high quality music, singing & sensory sessions and access live concerts & performances.**

All sessions for Term 3 were face to face with strict health and safety measures in place including the use of face masks and visors. We also held a live music concert and a sharing concert for the families.

**Provide MOPS workforce with the tools to become self sufficient in music making sessions, using tuned percussion & ukuleles.**

Instrumental training for the MOPS team took place this term face to face. The team had one instrumental training session with a further two sessions to be held in the Spring Term. Face to face training did not take place in Term 1 and 2 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The MOPS team have begun to put the instrumental skills explored in the training session into practice during the playgroup sessions, including during 'Hello time' and using instruments with the children throughout the playgroup day.

### **OUTCOME 1 - PERSONAL**

**To improve communication in a vocal, emotional or physical way in response to group music sessions & concerts.**

The children had the opportunity this term to attend a live music concert at the playgroup provided by professional musicians.

***Wednesday 8th December: Matt Bond and the Good Time Boys*** - 3 rock and roll musicians provided a collection of Christmas songs and rock and roll favourites.

This concert was held during normal playgroup hours. COVID-19 restrictions meant families were not able to attend this concert and therefore the MOPS team and children were only those present.

The children really enjoyed this live concert experience. There were many examples of excited faces, vocal and instrumental sounds, and movements as soon as the band started to play. T in particular was fascinated by the drummer. He was able to have a little go on the drums before the concert started which was met with squeals of delight, laughter and lots of vocal sounds.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on the MOPS facebook page.

See link below.

### [Matt Bong and the Good Time Boys](#)

We were also able to hold our second sharing concert with families, friends and the MOPS children and team. This is always such a highlight as it brings everyone together and the children really enjoy performing and interacting in front of and with their families. Sharing concerts provide opportunities for families to enjoy live musical experiences with their child and gain insight into their child's interactions at playgroup and how the team support and encourage them to explore and achieve.

Extracts from the sharing concert can be seen by clicking the link below.

### [Sharing Concert](#)

The MOPS team explore different instruments with the children throughout playgroup life.

Here S can be seen playing the piano and making different sounds independently.

### [S Playing the piano](#)

## **Observations from Group & Music Therapy Sessions for B, J, T and H**

The observations in Term 3 focus on improvisation, supporting child led musical interactions and the importance and value of doing so. The observations focus on children who have Autism and Downs Syndrome.

These observations provide examples of musical responses where the children were engaging freely, with opportunities to create, adapt and guide their own musical experiences. Observations suggest that children do not always respond productively to following a strict lesson plan or activities which can not be adapted in the moment to the children's responses. The examples suggest that many children, regardless of their unique needs, flourish when the ML steps back to see the session from the child's viewpoint, quickly grasping what the child wants to achieve, explore and/or attempt. The ML can then adapt their responses and support the child to explore in their own way, including at times just observing and being nearby and guiding the child when required. This support led to much more progressive and participatory musical sessions.

**VIGNETTE 1 - Child: B  
ML Observations**

**B: Down Syndrome**

It has taken a few terms for B to trust the ML and feel comfortable. I have used lots of eye contact and praise during group sessions to support B to build confidence in these sessions. B is usually quiet during group sessions however in music therapy she has started to use her voice and gain in confidence.

B came and sat on the mat as soon as I arrived this morning, she knew it was her music therapy session today. Today B felt completely comfortable in my presence. She placed her fingers on my guitar and started to play with energy and louder than she has played before (not as delicate/timid). We then moved onto the song 'Miss Polly' using a drum. I would sing and then play on the 'Sick Sick Sick'. We repeated the pattern throughout this song. B signed throughout this song - called, bag, hat, wrote etc. She then gradually tapped out the rhythm on the drum without signs recognising the rhythmic pattern. I then stepped back and sang and she tapped the rhythm independently. Her taps got louder as time passed.

We then explored the recorders. In group sessions when we have used recorders previously, B could not make a sound. Today she instinctively blew and was delighted she made a sound. She smiled and laughed every time she made a sound. We did this a few times using the 'Miss Polly' song and she gradually blew the rhythm repetitively. We then switched to the microphone. We had tried the microphone for a few weeks and no sound was evident. This week she blew on it and realised it made a sound. This made her giggle. I then started singing the 'Miss Polly' song once more. She giggled and made her own sounds the first two rounds. On the third round to my surprise she started to sing some of the words. By the 5th round she was singing the whole song reflecting the correct pitch and rhythm! After teaching B for almost two years I had never heard her use so many words before.

After speaking with her KW it is evident that B takes time to trust and feel comfortable with people. However as soon as this bond has occurred she builds confidence and begins to interact musically including using her voice and exploring new sounds and resources.

B is beginning to share her understanding of the difference between loud and quiet. My aim this week was to see if B could make louder sounds with instruments and her voice. B likes to do everything very gently and quietly and with precision. I showed her the Makaton signs for quiet and loud. We then explored different instruments that were quiet and loud. B appeared to really enjoy this and gently moved the cabassa and chimes, banged her drum loudly and crashed the cymbals together. She gradually got louder and louder with those instruments that were loud. I was completely led by her and what she wanted to play but kept coming back to "Was that loud or quiet?". Each time she responded with the Makaton sign and each time she knew the difference. We explored the microphones again and she became louder with her singing voice, so loud in fact that her friends heard her and clapped when she had finished. This was delightful to watch as B smiled and was proud of herself and connected with peers as they tuned in to her singing.

**VIGNETTE 2 - Child: T  
ML Observations**

**T: Developmental Delay and Autism**

T performed to his friends today singing 'Baby Shark' on the microphone. B came and sat by him and listened intently. T enjoyed this and sang the song on his own whilst I just played the chords. A wonderful interaction with his peers.

ML sang 'Baby Shark' at the beginning of the session to encourage T to join the music session. He was happy singing along and doing the actions. We then did this again with the microphone and he went around the room performing to his friends. When back on the carpet we sang 'If you're happy and you know it bang the drum'. We did this a few times and then T started making vocal sounds. I copied every sound he made which he was delighted with (strong eye contact, smiles, eagerness) we did this for many of his vocal sounds. His KW mentioned that she could see him processing all of the sounds that he wanted to share with me. I then tapped out some of his sounds on the drum which he copied.

We then moved on to a toy baby that T had bought with him which he had started to cuddle. For 5 mins T kissed, cuddled, looked after, stroked, sang, hushed the baby while I sang a simple calm melody on the triangle and then with the guitar. T was so quiet, peaceful, thoughtful and caring with the baby. His energy had shifted and he was calm, relaxed and enjoying the moment with baby. The song and words the ML provided were all in response to T's actions and musical play. T guided the direction of the sessions and was aware of this special musical interaction with the ML. T is usually on the go and very energetic and to see this shift in energy and engagement, enjoying the musical moment, was wonderful.

**VIGNETTE 3 - Child: H  
ML Observations**

**H: Autism and Developmental Delay**

Session 1. H came to today's session with his iPad. To begin with it was difficult to engage with H due to the iPad and I became a background soundtrack to what he was watching. However, instead of removing the iPad at this stage which would have distressed H, I incorporated the number block app he was playing into the session. I sang a few songs about number blocks and tapped the screen on different numbers. H would sway, bounce, occasionally smile and a couple of times made eye contact. He also tapped the screen rhythmically.

I also played instrumental sounds such as the tambourine and chimes around his body. He would occasionally acknowledge these by touching them briefly, giving a tiny bit of eye contact but also would push away the instruments so he could play the iPad. H then wanted to move so I followed him around the space interacting with him by playing and singing with what he was playing or interacting with. At the end of the session H was still playing the iPad but was moving to the music, giving eye contact and providing vocal sounds as though singing.

Session 2. H sat in his chair for the welcome song. He briefly held eye contact and tapped my guitar however after a few moments he became rigid & made distressed vocal sounds. H wanted to move around the space.

I followed H into the garden. I sang a continuous song of "I will follow H wherever he may go". H enjoyed this song and every time he did something e.g. pick up a leaf we would put it into the song. H liked being in control (child led) and responded and interacted much more than whilst sitting. We played a game of posting the leaves through the fence walking around the garden. We did this pattern about 10 times. Lots of eye contact, tapping my guitar occasionally, making vocal sounds and looking for me when I had stopped.

Session 3. H was in his chair for the welcome song today. Lots of eye contact, tapping my guitar and making vocal sounds. He was quite happy sitting for some time. He indicated that he was ready to move with vocal sounds. Today I sang the same song "I will follow H" around the space. We sat at the dolls house and he made up patterns e.g. moving blocks up and down the stairs, blocks in different rooms etc. We sang about all of this. All the time he was giving eye contact and seemed content/comfortable and enjoying the guitar being so close to him. He then found a tub of shape blocks which he posted into the shape block. We sang about the shapes and colours as H was doing this. H made lots of vocal sounds! I then put the bells on top of his shapes. He did not like this at first and made lots of annoyed sounds and showing me his angry face. But I kept putting it back and eventually he picked them up and played them for a few moments. Some sounds H finds difficult to process initially but with repetition and time he seems to enjoy the sound and textures. I then put the piano next to his blocks and put the shapes on the piano keys. H enjoyed this and would take a block and post it but also play the piano with me. He vocalised EiEiO so we sang and played Old Macdonald. Lots of eye contact and vocal sounds. He also rested his head on my shoulder for quite some time. It was though he was feeling the feedback through my body and he was comfortable and building a connection with me.

He then played with a number puzzle and we sang 12345. He put the 7,8,9 in the puzzle in sequence to the song! Always listening and responding in his own way. We then played goodbye with my guitar. There was a lot of eye contact, smiles, playing my guitar and making vocal sounds. Huge Progress!

Being led by H and improvising musical games and responses based on his play supported H to engage in musical exploration, build connection with the ML and develop his communication through musical interactions. H feels comfortable when able to control elements of his environment and is then able to process how he wants to interact with the ML and also the instruments. Following a lesson plan of rigid songs and activities would not work for H and would cause frustration and distress. By allowing musical activities to be free and open, H was able to participate within his needs.

**Using the Sounds of Intent Framework music leaders & MOPS staff will document individual communicative responses and engagement and track how children interact/progress/learn in a group setting and how this effects them individually.**

Using the Sounds of Intent framework has been a valuable tool in helping to identify the small nuances in our Childrens reactions to their music session. Although it took time for the staff to familiarise themselves with the framework domains, inputting the data was simple and user friendly.

**Families will report on communicative responses developed as a result of music sessions through informal discussion at sharing sessions / concerts.**

We held our first indoors sharing concert this term with families in attendance. The session was well attended by parents, siblings and other family members. LS led the session as Sing & Sign unfortunately could not attend due to Covid. The families always really enjoy these sessions as they can see what their children have been learning throughout the term and also interact with them during the musical activities. As this was our Christmas Concert we included lots of Christmas favourites which enabled the group to comfortably join in with singing, signing and moving around with their children. The MOPS team also shared "3 little birds" signed song which was accompanied by the ML on guitar. This song has also been made into a video with the MOPS team choir singing the song and the children accompanying with vocal sounds. We will share the video in Term 4.

Families also have time for informal feedback at these sessions which is a wonderful way for both staff and families to gain insight into the children's musical achievements and overall learning. Some responses were as follows:

**Music leaders will document the development of communication responses within the group and individually.**

Weekly observations and written notes have been documented throughout Term 3 by ML and KW's. Feedback from families has also been noted.

**VIGNETTE 4**  
**Feedback from MOPS Team and ML**

### **Sing and Sign**

A will happily sit on her chair and join in with signing from a distance. She doesn't seem to need to go up to the ML's face to engage.

There is a small cohort of children that are responding better to sing and sign due to their ability to engage better with it, in particular AB, SB and BB are much more vocal and will join in the actions. I have noticed that DB zones out of group music sessions unless she is supported to engage in the activity. I am not sure that the more complex needs children engage as well with sing and sign, YW hasn't done as well in group music over the last term. I think sing and sign works better if the child has better understanding, as they adapt better to something that is less familiar each week.

In the sessions I was with H I wouldn't say that he actively enjoyed group music sessions as far as I could tell, but he did learn to tolerate them much better, with extended periods without a support toy and particularly engaged much more with parachute songs by the end of the term.

### **Rainbow Singing**

With Rainbow Singing we decided to keep it more familiar rather than try to theme to curriculum as we struggled to find songs that the children engaged with, however we haven't been consistent in delivering it and need to address this, partly as Friday was our day and a volunteer music leader started to come in more regularly and we weren't organised to deliver it on a Thursday. One thing that I have noticed is that nearly all the children engage well with our simple song session where they choose from song cards, and seem to get enjoyment from this.

### **Music Therapy**

S's last session she was very vocal changing her tone almost like she was singing along.

T's confidence in music sessions has increased greatly throughout the last term. He now sings loudly and with gusto to familiar timetable songs such as the weather song and hello song, and is an active participant in the call/response songs during Little Star. He showed throughout his one to one music therapy sessions that he had learned many of the songs that the ML uses regularly by anticipating the songs as soon as she produced an instrument.

This confidence was observed during our Christmas term concerts, when he gathered up the instruments and put them in the musician's handbag singing the Little Stars tidy up song during our carol concert, and when he approached the rock and roll band to sit behind the drum kit during the performance!

### **Musical Training**

We initially used the instruments at hello time and in rainbow singing. Some of the children seemed surprised and others took no notice. A few of the children would then look to engage with the instrument after hello time. I don't think that some of staff have the confidence to bring the instruments out regularly and the other issues are having time to practice to gain confidence and our sessions get busy, and we forget to bring them out.

We've used the ukulele training at group hello times, and I have also used it one to one with Y during focus time, playing familiar songs to him on the uke and giving him a choice of instruments to play along with. I also find it useful to use instruments during intensive interaction and have done this with Y, Y and A.

## **OUTCOME 2 - WORKFORCE**

**To develop MOP's Workforce musical skills to enable them to become a self sufficient music making setting.**

**Trainers will document workforce/leaders progress through written reports, evaluations and video/photographic evidence.**



**MOP's workforce will report on each other's achievements progress & improvements after they have used their skills in group music sessions through informal discussion and note taking.**

**Music Leaders will report on improvements in MOP's workforces ability, to develop music making opportunities for the children.**

After so many restrictions relating to COVID-19 it was fantastic to hold our first instrumental training session with the MOPS team for this project. The session focussed on songs familiar to the team and the setting using a variety of tuned percussive instruments.

These included:  
Large Xylophone  
Chime Bars  
Steel Pan  
Ukuleles  
Tuned hand bells

The team are always so positive and enjoyed making music together.

The team have been trying to implement their training by playing the instruments during hello time. The ML observed the group and the addition of instrumental sounds enabled the team to maintain a rhythm, sing in the same pitch throughout and the children were surprised as they observed the staff doing this and reacted with giggles, confusion and awe. Here are some images of the team using ukulele with the children throughout the playgroup day and during their training.



We hope to do two further sessions in Term 4 to extend instrumental skills further, build confidence and support continued incorporation of these skills into daily practise.



## **CONCLUSION**

Term 3 highlights the return of musical opportunities such as indoor live performances and sharing concerts with families and friends which have been restricted previously due to COVID-19. Observations provide multiple examples of the benefits of these opportunities where the children were able to connect with the musicians, the MOPS team, ML and their families and share their joy and musical achievements in a supportive and celebratory environment.

During these live music opportunities and the weekly group and one to one sessions, ML's and staff were committed and consistent in their approach to musical exploration; modelling, supporting and providing positive feedback to all children as they explored and engaged in their own musical ways. In such a motivating, supportive environment children are compelled to explore, move and play, building confidence to share their emotional and communicative preferences.

Term 3 observations also provide an insight into the need and preference for many of the children to lead, guide and control their musical interactions and the benefit these opportunities can have on emotional, communicative and musical learning. The ML summarises her awareness of this need during her interactions with the children this term and how she adapted her approach and stepped back from teacher led activities, supporting the children's musical interactions and preferences. Music does not need to be stationary, in a certain time or space with exclusively musical props; it can become part of everyday play and movement around the space, utilising different resources children are interacting with to support further participation, engagement and learning.

Overall we continue to see the benefits incorporating Makaton into daily practise and musical experiences can have for the children at MOPS. Term 3 highlights examples where Makaton was used as a tool to not just communicate needs/preferences but to share musical understanding. The use of Makaton has supported the children to explore musical elements and pieces in multiple ways; using signing, vocalising, movement and instrumental play, extending their learning experiences both communicatively and musically. Feedback in Term 3 also indicates that responses to Makaton are different for each child and that reflection is needed to ensure its use is differentiated for individual needs within the different music sessions.

After only one instrumental training session the MOPS team have begun incorporating aspects explored into their practise. The MOPS team are enthusiastic about the benefits extending musical play throughout the day can bring with observations from Term 3 providing examples of the children's engagement and focus, particularly during one to one interactions. Training feedback from the MOPS team also highlights the challenges around staff confidence, practising these new instrumental skills and ensuring these activities are part of the daily timetable. This feedback is vital as the ML plans the next training sessions and how she can support / explore these challenges.

Feedback from the MOPS team and ML's, as well as observations of the children and informal feedback from families has provided a detailed picture of the benefits, challenges and impact of all areas of the project so far and supports its longevity as strategies and practises are reflected upon, adapted, developed and improved.