

**Youth Music - Westfield
'Engaging Sounds' - Increasing engagement of learning through music
Term 4 - Spring Term 2022**

KEY:

ML: Music Leader

TML: Trainee Music Leader Buckinghamshire Music Trust

WPS: Westfield Primary School

KS1: Key Stage 1

KS2: Key Stage 2

The Term 4 report was completed by Kath Borer (Project Leader and ML) and reviewed by Kirsty Mees (Evaluation Officer)

OVERALL AIM

To enable Westfield Primary children to engage in high quality ensemble sessions that challenge, develop and progress musical, social and personal skills for life.

The 'Engaging Sounds' Project offers live group music making sessions and performance opportunities to the children attending Westfield Primary School (WPS). WPS caters for children experiencing difficulties in communication and interaction. Term 4 of the project consisted of the Music Leader (ML) and Trainee Music Leader (TML) providing weekly music sessions to three classes in KS2. The project will run for 6 terms alternating between KS2 and KS1 classes with Term 1 focusing on KS2 and Term 2&3 focusing on KS1. Term 4&5 will focus on KS2 before returning to KS1 in Term 6. All sessions for Term 4 were face to face with no restrictions.

Term 4 consisted of 4 sessions a week on a Thursday working with Years 3, 4 and 5 with the addition of 2 sessions each Monday for Year 6. On Mondays the ML provided the sessions solo and adapted the lesson plan and session structure to engage and support the age and needs of the children. Term 4 focussed on (i) musical differences which became the theme for each session (ii) learning simple chords on the ukulele (iii) group rhythm with drums (iv) listening to a whole piece of music broken down each week into sections (v) songwriting using the theme/musical differences.

The following structure and outcomes were the basis for KS2:

Welcome -

Hey How You Doing

- Singing or moving to a repeated song
- Finding and playing the beat with body percussion
- Creating music as a group

What's your name?

- Sang simply with Makaton signs. The children in turn would sing or make a vocal sound/ eye contact back.

Group Playing -

Every two weeks we changed the theme/musical difference and used a variety of instruments and songs to enable the children to hear, listen and feel the differences.

These included:

- Fast & Slow (Ghostbusters)
- Pitch (Sometimes I feel so happy)
- Dynamics (It's oh so quiet)
- Crescendo and Decrescendo (Shake it oh baby)
- Major & Minor (King of the Swingers) (we used Blue for sad and Yellow for happy)

Group Ukuleles -

Songs: Shake it off, improvised playing

- Learning different strumming patterns and rhythms
- Learning chords Am, C, and G
- Playing as a group
- Playing in solo

Moving

Improvised by TML using the theme of the week e.g. fast and slow

- Awareness of musical difference and responding with movement
- Moving and engaging creatively; independently and as a group
- Improve gross motor skills and physical response to the music
- Interacting with TML - TML noted in the moment responses and improvised around them

Rhythm

Songs: Everybody can you play along, We don't talk about Bruno, Sea Shanty Billy of Tea, Improvised patterns, Can you copy my rhythm

- Playing in time and feeling the rhythm/pulse
- Following musical cues
- Playing untuned percussion in solo, duet or as a group
- Improvising rhythmic patterns using simple notation

Songwriting

Based on the weekly theme usually centred around animals

- Writing topical songs together led by the children
- Using the theme/musical differences to embed musical learning

Listening

Led by TML and using extracts from Peter and the Wolf, developing the story and characters each week

- Reacting to a piece of music heard using the musical differences to embed musical learning
- Communicating to the group and leaders what they heard and how it made them feel

Goodbye - Counting Stars

- Singing, eye contact or making sounds to repeated song
- Singing their own name back to ML
- Recognition that it's the end of the session
- Following musical cues

The structure was the same each week which the children found comforting, promoting exploration and participation. Each week the ML would write the lesson plan on the white board and the children would read it before the session begun. Some of the children would shout out what they were going to do next e.g. drumming as they were following the plan on the board. The children responded well to the familiar structure but also enjoyed the variety of songs within the structure. This supported the varying needs of the groups and provided a consistent and familiar learning experience with appropriate changes and additions to extend participation and engagement.

OUTCOME 1 - MUSICAL

To improve rhythm, pulse & tempo skills using group musical activities

This will be explored by:

- *Playing untuned / tuned percussion in solo, duet or as a group using musical games*
- *Improvising rhythmic patterns using simple notation*
- *Moving and dancing with a variety of props/instruments to different tempo's*

This term we used the ukuleles (this is something the children have been desperate to play) and learnt some simple chords over a number of weeks. We also played around with different strumming patterns and played in solo and as a group. Towards the end of term all classes had learnt the chords Am, C and G on the ukuleles using coloured stickers to identify the chord patterns. We used green for Am, orange for C and purple for G. We avoided yellow and blue as this relates to Happy and Sad for children with Autism at the Westfield School. The stickers helped us to play and sing the song Shake it Off, exploring accompaniment and playing and singing together.

We sang:

'Let's play on the green, green, green, let's play on the orange, orange, orange, let's play on the purple, purple, purple, let's play on the purple, purple, purple.'

We slowly removed the colours and replaced them with the words of the song which the children adapted to with ease. We would always allow for some time to free play where the children could explore the ukulele creating their own patterns and playing styles. This allowed them to focus for a short time knowing that free play would also be included. All children were supported to engage in ways appropriate to their needs and enjoyed exploring the colour patterns. Some children were very interested in the chord sequence and mastered playing and changing chords, others enjoying creating their own chord patterns, playing to the beat and/or playing in solo.

All of the children made huge progress over the term and some children have shown an interest in wanting to learn the ukulele in 1-1 sessions as a result of the group sessions.

Drumming this term was led by the children with two of their favourite song choices:

- Wellerman - Billy of Tea (A sea shanty)
- We don't talk about Bruno (Encanto Movie Sound Track)

Every week the children would become excited and shout out 'Is it time for Bruno'. We played around with the song each week depending on the musical differences. For example for Pitch we sang the song high and low whilst tapping out the beat. We also sang 'Everybody can you play along'. The children quickly memorised the song and would sing it loudly whilst tapping out the various rhythms. The children also took turns to be the conductor leading their peers using Makaton signs, singing, and the rhythm to the song. Every single child in all the groups wanted to be the conductor and were animated, excited and proud that they had shared the song with their peers.

The moving section was a favourite for the children. This term we used long ribbons which allowed the children to be more creative with their movements. The ribbons allowed for length, distance, motion and expression. The children would very easily tune into the TML instrument and instantly begin to move as the music suggested. For example when the TML played fast music on her harmonica the children would run around or move their ribbon very quickly. When the TML played slowly they would walk or drag their ribbon behind them, some lay on their stomachs and pulled themselves along. When the TML played a Major melody and a Minor melody the children danced around with huge smiles on their faces for happy music and then moved slower and showed sad facial expressions for sad. These emotions can be difficult for children with additional needs to express and the musical experiences allowed them to feel the differences in an engaging and distinctive way which led to exploration of how these emotions may be expressed.

Observations:

Pear 3 - M liked to join in from a distance. He would often sit behind a teacher and did not like to have eye contact with the ML. However he always wanted an instrument but he would just play it out of sight. He did not like praise when the ML commended him and would hiss like a cat. Throughout the term he gradually moved from behind the teacher and by the end of term he sat on the bench with his peers. When it was his turn to lead the group with drumming he whispered to his teacher that he really wanted to but only if the ML turned her back and could not see him. We went with this and he sang and played the song to all of his peers without any hesitation. Fantastic progress!

Pear 2 - Whilst the TML played the Wolf part in 'Peter and the Wolf' piece during the listening section a group of the boys noticed the change in melody (minor key) and realised it was the wolf. They sat holding their knees and pretended to tremble as if the wolf was coming. They emotionally connected with the music without being led by the ML or TML by listening to the music and interpreting the musical cues and features.

Pear 1 - il preferred playing the drum quietly. Each week we would play the drums with Crescendo and Decrescendo. Often before the ML could get to this part, il would shout out 'let's play Crescendo' and would lead his peers. He would then shout out 'let's play Decrescendo' and again lead his peers. il very quickly grasped musical phrases and words e.g. Lento and Allegro with their proper meaning and often shouted out and told his peers what they meant.

Pear 2 - One of the teachers from Pear 2 wanted to show me a video of D and M singing and playing at Forrest school. The girls sat around the camp fire and led their classmates in their version of the drumming song from the group sessions 'Everybody can you play along' using their knees as the drums. They led the song with beautiful singing, all of the Makaton signs and rhythms. This was wonderful to see how they have taken music to a different part of their school day and wanted to share it with their peers. It also shows how much they listen, participate and enjoy the music sessions and can internalise and recreate familiar musical concepts.

Pear 4 - C who is non verbal really enjoys playing all of the instruments and participates with all songs and activities. After a few weeks I was amazed that he was able to play all the chords in progression on the ukulele with ease, moving his fingers between the chords. He played the piece in solo to the group and after held eye contact with me and smiled brightly.

OUTCOME 2 - PERSONAL

To improve language and communication through composition and songwriting

This will be explored by:

- *Singing and sharing favourite pop, folk and world songs together with instruments*
- *Writing topical songs together led by the children*
- *Sound making games*

Songwriting this term focussed on the the bi-weekly musical differences. We also added visual pictures this term drawn by the TML, that enabled the children to recall their song in a visual way rather than using words. Communicating through pictures was much easier for some of the children to interact with. The children's responses were imaginative and always played with the theme in some way. The children looked forward to this section every week as it was a way for them to express their musical ideas and enabled them to be imaginative and share their ideas with their peers.

The ML sang a simple melody each week and adapted this to work with the musical differences e.g major/minor fast/slow. Instead of writing out the lyrics we slotted them into the familiar song each week and pointed to the pictures. After a couple of rounds the children were singing the song as a group independently with little input from the ML and TML.

The song followed a simple structure:

What things are

What things are

What things are

What things are

..... are really FAST

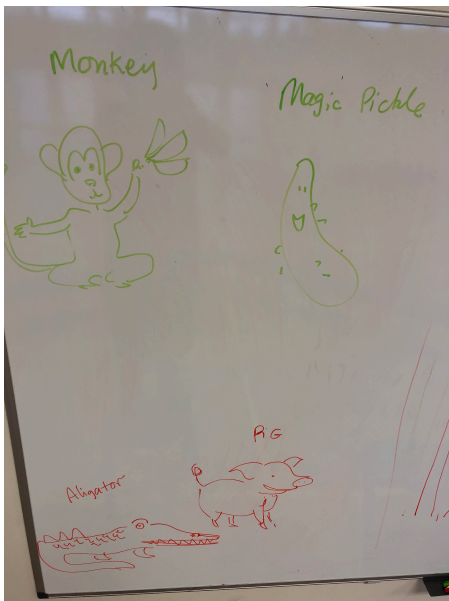
.....are really SLOW

..... are really FAST

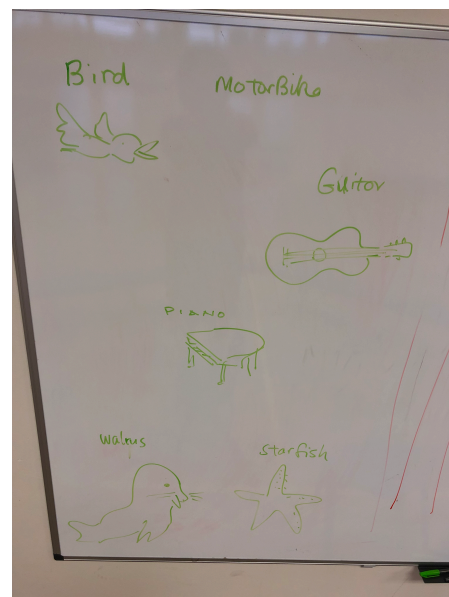
..... are really SLOW

Examples of songwriting and visuals

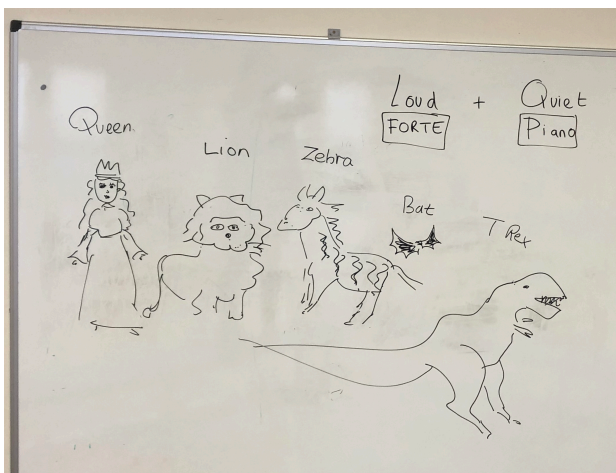
Pitch - High and low



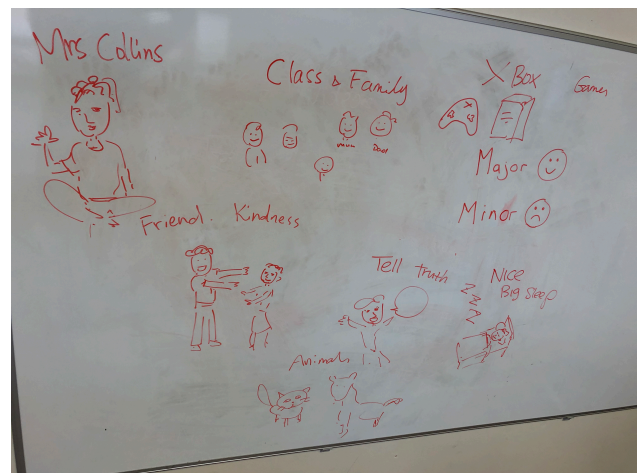
Fast and Slow



Dynamics - Loud and Quiet



Major (Happy) and Minor (Sad)



CHILDREN'S FEEDBACK

The children's feedback highlights the sensory experiences of the children particularly around noise sensitivity and is something which the ML and TML continually consider in their planning. A consistent and flexible approach to volume and instrumental exploration is important when working with additional needs which is evident in the ML's planning and delivery. Term 5 may highlight new or modified sensory responses as the sessions continue for these children. This feedback will contribute to and guide the ML and TML's planning and delivery in Term 5.

1. What do you like about music sessions?

Let's tidy song

The music

It makes me happy

When TML plays her music

Guitar and Ukulele

I don't like it

All of it

I like the Goodbye Song

Singing

Drumming

2. Is there anything you don't like about music sessions?

Yes the people
It's too loud
It's too noisy

No x4
When the singing is too loud
Nothing

3. What instrument is your favourite?

Crocodile one - Clatterpillar
None
Guitar - Ukuleles x2
The round wooden block
Wooden knocking bird

Shaker - Thundery one
Drum x3
Cymbals
The block drum

4. What song or activity have you enjoyed the most during music sessions?

Let's tidy
Making up my own songs
Spiderman song
Shake it off
Ukulele

Sky full of stars from Sing 2 x4
Little star hello
When Shima plays the piano
Not sure
Singing goodbye

5. What new songs would you like to explore during Music Sessions?

No
I'm still standing
Ariane Grandi - Focus

Ghostbusters
None
Don't know x3

6. Which emoji best describes how you feel during music sessions?



9



2



2



TEACHERS FEEDBACK

1. After a term of music sessions how do you feel the sessions have been for your year group?

Brilliant they are perfectly pitched for the class and they love it!
Really engaging

2. Is there anything that would be useful to change or adapt in the sessions to meet the children's needs?

No x2

3. What activity do you feel the children enjoy the most during sessions?

They love singing and playing along with songs they know
Different instruments

4. What activity do you feel the children enjoy the least during sessions?

They still love it but maybe the dancing
Dancing - I have to put something

5. Are there any topics that would be useful to cover in music?

I think that lots of topics are already covered

No

6. Are there any other resources you feel would be helpful to have at music sessions?

I think the sessions are very well resourced

No

TML FEEDBACK

1. What challenges have you encountered?

Compared to the Autumn Term, the workshop environment was largely back to normal, as corona-related restrictions were relaxed. This meant that we were able to perform closer to the children, but coronavirus was still prevalent, so a major challenge was to take measures to prevent COVID infection while still incorporating situations where keyboards and other instruments were shared with the children in the workshop.

2. Was the session well prepared and supported by the Music Leader?

Before the start of the Spring Term, I had a Zoom meeting with Kath, our Music Leader, to get a clear picture of what songs we would be using in the workshops and what she would be focusing on throughout the term. I suggested some ideas for the 'story' theme, and Kath was open to trying out ideas such as using 'Peter and the Wolf' and including drawing in the songwriting section.

3. What did you enjoy about the sessions?

In addition to the children physically enjoying the music through the workshops, this term I enjoyed working with the children to create a 'story' out of the music. In particular, I chose to focus on S. Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf' in the listening section. The first half of the term we introduced the piece (the children were free to imagine the story and the characters) and the second half of the term focused on the story. The story began with the introduction of the main character Peter, and we followed the flow of the story by adding one scene each week. It was rewarding to see the process of recalling the previous week's memories through music, and then adding new stories on the day, and also to anticipate what would happen next week.

I also enjoyed the songwriting section, where I experimented not only to write the words suggested by the children, but also to draw pictures to stimulate their imaginations and link them to the music.

4. Is there anything you would change to make the sessions more effective?

I can't think of anything in particular.

5. Would you be able to lead a session yourself with the support of a music leader?

Yes, I would.

6. Is there anything you don't enjoy during the sessions?

Sometimes I don't know the words to some of the songs used in the session, which are English songs that everyone knows. I also feel limited by the fact that even when I practise in advance, I sometimes have trouble with the songs, especially when they are fast-paced,

but this does not hinder the overall performance and does not have a negative impact on the workshop.

7. What have you learnt from this project?

As a melody and keyboard player, my communication with the children has naturally centred on melody and chords. Through this project, I realised the great importance of the drum instrument. The drum makes it easier for children to understand the concepts of dynamics and pulse without the distraction of other musical features, because the drum resonates directly with them. It has also broadened my thinking about music education. For example, I am now privately teaching a boy with Down's Syndrome who is too young to play a keyboard instrument, and through drumming I am able to communicate with him successfully and develop his musical language.

ML REFLECTIONS

The children's understanding and performance of musical differences and their rhythmic and emotional expression have really progressed throughout the term. At the end of the last session myself and the TML discussed how we could challenge the children further next term as their understanding and willingness to learn was obvious. Next term we will extend their musical skills and understanding by introducing Ta, TiTi and Shh rhythmic patterns, the difference between beat and rhythm, solfege, and bringing ensemble musical stories to life.

Listening skills in the movement section and the listening section at the end of the session (Peter and the Wolf) really highlighted how much they feel and emotionally connect to music they hear. Both of these sections asked for very little of the children but in response they gave so much by expressing themselves with movement, physical responses and by telling us what they heard in the music. Both sections were always full of things we as ML and TML had not even thought of and were complex and thought provoking.

This term also highlighted that regardless of the varying needs within the groups the children were able to feel comfortable and supported by their peers in a group setting, engage how they wished and feel supported about their individual responses by the ML, TML and their teachers. By being able to freely participate and not asked to conform to specific musical expectations or respond the same as their peers, the children were able to make music independently, make music as a group and listen to and respect each other.

Across all the sessions the children would always cheer, whoop and make lots of sounds whenever one of their classmates had a "wow" moment and showed so much empathy and compassion for each others achievements.

OBSERVATION FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MUSIC TRUST

See Attached

This thoughtful observation highlights the positive impact of the 'Engaging Sounds' project in providing training opportunities for music leaders, and the progression of the TML across the project. Sensitive, reflective and meaningful musical interactions are evident from both ML and TML, providing a musical environment where the children have

developed confidence, social and communication skills, musical understanding and musical techniques.

TML's own reflections also highlight the benefits opportunities to work with different music leaders can have on professional development particularly where support can occur over time with many moments to reflect, co-plan and practise skills. TML appears to be thriving within this structure particularly in the sections of the sessions built around her strengths and musical skills. This is important when considering how best to support and extend practitioner practice, providing opportunities to succeed and also extend skills to less familiar areas. Over the following terms the ML will begin to step into a more supporting role for varying sections of the session, extending TML leadership into different areas.

CONCLUSION

Term 4 of 'Engaging Sounds' highlights the enthusiasm and enjoyment the KS2 children experienced in the music sessions. Observations offer examples of thoughtful, confident and highly musical input from the children as they engaged with as well as guided the musical experiences. Across the project we have seen consistent examples of effective practise and this was again evident in Term 4 with a focus from ML and TML on adapting experiences for the age and needs of the children and building the musical experiences around the children's responses. The ML and TML provided new opportunities for the children to express their musical preferences and ideas through creative activities and songwriting and adapted planning in the moment based on responses and ideas as well as through reflection and feedback from the children. Term 4 also highlights the positive impact of a consistent structure as well as flexibility on the children's engagement, confidence and musical responses.

The ML has skilfully provided opportunities for TML to incorporate her own musical skills and instrumentation into her developing leadership. In Term 4 we see the benefits of this support and training as well as the opportunities co-leading can provide for the children with access to a broad range of musical experiences, styles, instrumentation, communication and interaction. If only these opportunities to train and co-lead were part of all music provision.

In Term 4 we see further impact of effective practise with the children exploring conducting, sharing their musical choices and engaging with peers, including those with significant needs. All children were able to find a way to participate and engage which allowed them to express their musical ideas with awareness and acceptance of sensory challenges and needs. The music sessions also allowed the children to explore emotions with many expressive and musical responses observed. The ML's sensitive and knowledgeable approach to promoting these skills and understanding is evident in Term 4.

Term 4 presents feedback from ML, TML, the children and teachers as well as an external observation. These comments and reflections encompass the different elements of the project and provide informative and wide ranging examples of the experiences of the children and teachers which highlight the benefits as well as challenges of the project and will impact future planning.