

# **Bedlington to Ashington Building Brass**

## **Introduction**

Building Brass, funded by Youth Music and Music Partnership North, is a brass regeneration project within the Bedlington and Ashington school partnerships in Northumberland. In its present form it has been running for 2 years, building on the success of the Bedlington Brass project, which had been running for three years previously.

This report aims to explore the following questions in respect of the Building Brass Project with a view to making recommendations for any further continuation of the project.

- Are there successful outcomes in evidence within this project?
- To what extent do the participants, families, schools and communities value the project?
- What are the aspirations for the future of this project?

## **Context**

Bedlington Brass was a project that began in 2012 within the schools in the Bedlington area, supported by a Youth Music grant and Music Partnership North. Its aim was to regenerate the brass band tradition of Bedlington, linking with the local mining heritage and fostering intergenerational links, whilst giving all children an opportunity to participate in ongoing brass tuition and ensemble playing in line with 'The Importance of Music: A National Plan for Music Education' (NPME). It built on the whole class instrumental tuition programme, which was at that time, an entitlement for all children at key stage 2 (NPME). At this stage, all the schools involved in the project were fully briefed on the aims and aspirations and a clear outline of responsibilities and requirements was agreed.

As a direct result of the impact that Bedlington Brass was starting to have on the children, schools and the community, a further round of funding was sought, with the intention of rolling the project out further afield into Ashington, enhancing the quality and outcomes by embedding Arts Award within the delivery and incorporating high quality professional development for both instrumental tutors and school based staff.

The progression of the project relies on schools participating in first access whole class brass ensemble tuition (WCET). Following on from this, pupils have the opportunity to join a mini-band within the school and at this stage they are also made aware of the Bedlington Youth and Community Brass Band, which was established during the Bedlington Brass project. Tuition is continued through these mini-bands and pupils can participate in these either throughout middle school (up to and including year 8) or to the end of primary at year 6, depending on the transition arrangements for each school.

Initially there were a total of fifteen schools directly involved in the delivery of Building Brass. In Bedlington there are seven first schools, two primary schools and one middle school participating. In the Ashington partnership there are currently five primary schools involved.

## **Method: How were the questions investigated? How was evidence collected?**

Data collection and evaluation processes for this report were conducted through a variety of sources.

### **1. Enquiry project**

One school in Bedlington, where the project was perceived as being particularly successful, took part in an enquiry project. This enquiry investigated the factors affecting the success of the project there. The enquiry had been offered across the project schools, with any supply time covered through funding but only one school felt they were able to participate at this time due to capacity.

This school was considered, by MPN, as the most successful school in terms of enthusiasm, engagement, participation and impact. It was therefore useful as a marker for other school visits and conversations with staff and head teachers. The following overarching questions were investigated during a one-day visit:

- What do we know about the status of the “Building Brass” project within our school and community?
- How does our community perceive and support this project?

These questions were investigated through interviews with pupils, parents and staff, observation of the school mini-band and the school environment and reviewing the Arts Award portfolios.

**Findings:** A member of the teaching staff manages the project within the school. This includes learning the cornet with the children during the whole class first access sessions and in the mini band rehearsals. She has run practice sessions and cornet clinics and takes every enhancement opportunity offered by MPN including a workshop at Sage Gateshead and The Miner’s Picnic at Woodhorn Colliery Museum. Having a person within the school who is motivated to take on this role and continually support the pupils with their learning and organisation is a key factor in the success within the school. This member of staff does have a musical background and is also part of the school leadership team, both of which contribute to the level of positive engagement.

Pupils were enthusiastic about learning, with pupils in the whole class sessions being excited about having the opportunity to join the mini-band the next academic year. Some were able to discuss family members who were miners and had played in the original bands. Some pupils were also attending the Bedlington Youth and Community Brass Band.

The mini-band performance showed that many musical and performance skills had been learnt such as; playing in time and in two parts, producing a clear tone, good posture and accompanying a sung chorus. Reverend Ian Hennebry, who is the local Reverend for the school, has been supporting many of the mini-band performances and this has clearly enhanced their overall performance skills. In interview, Reverend Ian felt that this project was highly significant and important for the Bedlington area, as it gives the community something to value and be proud of that is linked to the local heritage.

Knowledge of the project with pupils and parents not directly involved in the mini-bands was limited. Pupils in key stage one were not aware that they would have the opportunity to learn

an instrument in year 3 and some parents of pupils in the whole class sessions didn't know that their children could join a mini-band following on from this. In dialogue with parents, there was minimal evidence to show that they had received information from school that this is a Youth Music funded project and is managed, delivered and financially supported by Music Partnership North.

Overall, this project is well established within the framework of the school but, perhaps due to the length of time that it has been running and because the format has remained essentially the same, understanding and awareness of the project's intentions, the framework which supports it and the funding that allows this to happen has become vague and there is a limited awareness of this within the wider community.

## **2. School-based staff discussions**

The status of the project within the school was explored through meetings with a cross section of head teachers and teachers/teaching assistants from across the project. Through discussion and direct questioning the following were explored:

- Whether there was awareness of any value perceived?
- Enthusiasm for the content
- Staffing arrangements for the project
- Standards achieved by pupils
- Standards of delivery and organisation from MPN
- Whether any CPD for school staff had been achieved, either planned or incidentally?
- Any difficulties and whether they were, or could be overcome
- Whether the band was showcased within the school or in the community
- Any anecdotal stories of success
- Awareness of where funding for the project was from
- If there were a loss of funding, would the school be able to prioritise the continuation within their own budget?

### **Findings:**

Of the six schools visited, four were very positive about the project in their school and felt that it was mostly a valuable experience and opportunity for their pupils. Positive feedback was as follows:

Tutors from MPN are very positive and enthusiastic. They communicate well with schools and have developed good working relationships with staff and pupils. They are approachable and helpful and their delivery is of a high standard. One school noted that their tutor, who has been linked to the school for several years, has grown in confidence and standard of delivery over that time.

Where a member of staff is learning alongside the pupils, it is felt that they are receiving valuable CPD in learning a musical instrument and understanding music. They are now confident to lead sessions themselves and in some cases to deliver music to pupils in other classes within the school. This is aided by the use of the online resource, 'Charanga' which contains a range of resources suitable for teaching music across the school. One teaching assistant who was interviewed said that the sessions had demystified music for her and that it wasn't as complicated as she had first thought.

Organisation and information from MPN is clear and timely and they appreciate the offers of extra enrichment opportunities such as participating in a workshop at Sage Gateshead, The Miner's Picnic at Woodhorn Colliery Museum and partnership showcasing events. However, it wasn't always possible for the schools to participate due to capacity within the school. The schools that have participated in these enrichment activities were more likely to sign up again for the 'extra' offers.

Performance opportunities are valued by the schools, particularly the large events where many schools come together to perform, or events in larger non-school based venues. Three of the schools visited found opportunities for the mini-band to perform within the school and community, although they all agreed that they could find more opportunities for this and that this would be beneficial in raising the profile of the project within school and the community and in engaging more pupils in continuation. One school was proactive in organising their own large-scale performance biennially at an external venue and incorporates the brass players within this.

Schools visited that are positive about the project had many anecdotal stories about the impact. They were particularly enthusiastic about the impact it is having on some of their SEND pupils. This is because they were experiencing success which then helped them to feel positive and have a sense of achievement. In one school, a parent who doesn't normally engage positively with school, was enthusiastic about her child joining the mini-band. She said that it gave him a chance to shine, as he 'isn't academic' and that he was 'hounding her' to fill in the form for the mini-band.

These are some of the quotes from pupils within the mini-bands:

"I love playing my cornet. It makes me feel peaceful. Music really helps me because it lets me know I can be successful at something."

"Mini band is incredible! We get lots of chances to play and perform."

"I love playing the cornet and have gained loads of confidence since performing at the Sage."

"I enjoy playing in the mini band and feel amazing when we get to the end of a piece of music after playing all together! I love the challenges of learning a new instrument and never thought I would get to be as good as I am and play at the Sage."

One head teacher observed that pupils' music training has been enhanced through the school's engagement with the brass project. In other musical activities, which she delivers, she was aware of this increased level of knowledge and skill.

One school, which has been subject to an Ofsted inspection during the course of the project, received positive praise for this within the report. It stated under, 'quality of teaching and learning,' that:

"Peripatetic music teaching is strong. All of the pupils in years 3,4, and 6 understand an increasing range of subject specific vocabulary and can play recognisable notes on the tenor horn. Their upper school ensemble played recognisable tunes, loudly and with gusto, during the inspection."

Also, under, 'Outcomes for pupils,'

“Pupils are making better progress in subject areas such as music and PE because they access expert tuition”

Schools that facilitated performances noted that this was a positive way to encourage parents to come into school and involve them in the life of the school.

Schools generally felt that the project had been successful in raising awareness of local traditions and because of the links to their local heritage it enhanced learning in other subject areas. As well as this, it was felt that the project has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and aspirations and supports the SMSC values.

The inclusion of Arts Award was generally seen as a positive aspect of the project. One head teacher felt that it had definitely helped with their Artsmark Gold application in which they were successful.

Schools that are positive about the impact of the project on their pupils and school would definitely like the project to continue and, if future external funding can't be sourced, they would try to find the funds from within school. However, they all stipulated that this would be difficult given the ongoing pressures on school budgets and the need to prioritise funding in other areas. One school also said that it would depend on how many pupils are involved, as any allocation of funding would have to show value for money and to allocate funds for a handful of pupils is not viable.

### **Challenges, suggestions and observations from schools:**

There is currently a large drop off as pupils change schools. One of the main factors thought to be affecting this is the change of tutor from one school to the next. This means that the new tutor is not familiar to the pupils and also the tutor is not aware which pupils have been learning in their first or primary school. This is currently being addressed by MPN and the tutors have been changed for the 2017 – 18 academic year to allow for a smoother transition. It will be interesting to reflect on this change at the end of this phase of the project.

Transition to high school can result in pupils giving up playing a brass instrument. This can be due to finance, as currently there is no funding to support brass tuition in the high schools so pupils whose families can't afford the fees for tuition will be unable to continue. However, these pupils could continue to learn through the Bedlington Youth and Community Brass Band, which runs a junior training band prior to the main band. This would involve attending a session on a Tuesday evening, which may be problematic for some families. There are currently 12 pupils attending the junior band.

Some pupils are 'lost' to the project through transition as they move area to attend a middle school in a different partnership. However, the alternative school does have a thriving music department and an ongoing link with another brass band so pupils can continue to learn through another route. It would be useful to formally track this data and see if these students attend any of the local brass bands, as this is still an effective outcome of the project. Information regarding this is currently sketchy.

There were concerns from some staff that pupils might find the instruments difficult to play and this may have a negative effect on their engagement in music or behaviour. Observation of

sessions showed that pupils who find the small mouthpieces difficult are usually offered a different, larger brass instrument and as the sessions are full of a variety of activities, there is opportunity to be successful within the lesson.

Changes of staffing in school can affect the balance of the project. This may be because a member of staff is absent for a long period due to maternity leave or ill health. If this staff member is the one who runs the project in school, administration and organisation can become difficult and enthusiasm and encouragement of students may be less evident.

A change of head teacher in a school may result in reduced awareness of the project and its purpose and intentions. This may result in a lower profile of the project within the school and community and this in turn affects the numbers in continuation.

Not all schools visited were aware of where the funding for the project is coming from, although they know that they have had the information and could look it up if necessary. Consequently, this information is currently not being shared adequately with parents and the wider community.

In one school visited, the member of staff interviewed did not perceive any value of music either within the curriculum, or in an extracurricular setting. They were particularly negative about the outcomes of the project in their school and did not think it was right for their pupils.

One head teacher feels that the music teaching in school has become narrower because of the engagement with the brass project. He misses the variety of instruments that had previously been brought into school through various projects. However, he did acknowledge that uptake of instrumental tuition is good and they are able offer a variety of instruments through the standard peripatetic tuition route.

In some schools head teachers feel that they are not able to allow the instruments to go home for practising between the mini-band sessions, as they are concerned that they will not be looked after appropriately. Some pupils, who head teachers feel would do well in the mini-band, are unable to join due to a lack of parental interaction and commitment.

### **3. Music Partnership North**

Music Partnership North is the music education hub for Northumberland and Newcastle. They applied to Youth Music for a grant for the original Bedlington Brass and subsequently the Building Brass projects. As Youth Music has funded these two phases of the brass development project, it is unlikely that they would be able to support another phase. Music Partnership North is also supporting the project financially through administration, supply and maintenance of instruments and provision of enrichment activities.

Two of the tutors involved in the delivery of the project were involved in discussions and observed delivering mini-band rehearsals. Feedback from previous performance management lesson observations and tutor diaries were reviewed and questionnaires were completed. The Youth Music Framework, 'Do, Review, Improve' has become an integral part of MPN's evaluation processes for the project.

The business development officer who is project managing Building Brass was involved in discussions and provided data and information as required.

## **Findings:**

Where a member of staff is fully embedded within the project, learning alongside the pupils and giving positive encouragement, the outcomes for pupils are perceived to be greater and there are larger numbers in continuation. These schools are also the ones where tutors feel most valued and they have a greater sense of achievement and enjoyment due to this.

One tutor noted that pupils who have first access whole class tuition in year 4 progress quicker overall than those pupils who start in year 3. They also find the instruments easier to manipulate due to their increased size. This is only possible in primary schools, as progression within first schools could not be facilitated.

Communications with schools can be difficult, particularly if there is no clearly designated member of staff to liaise with. Where there is a known person who is consistent, communication is more effective and positive outcomes are greater.

One tutor felt that it was easier to keep pupils involved if the mini-band rehearsals were at lunchtime. After school there is often more competition from other clubs and activities, or it is not possible for pupils to stay after school due to family circumstances.

During the course of the project, CPD days are organised by MPN which all schools are invited to attend. Supply cover is funded from the Building Brass grant. These are important days for reiterating the aims and intended outcomes, sharing good practice and addressing any issues. Attendance at these days has been patchy and this may have impacted on the success of the project in schools that have not attended. Reasons for non-attendance are mainly: capacity within schools, staff absence and cover availability. Schools may find it easier to engage with training if it was within their own school. Perhaps a staff meeting within their yearly schedule would have the benefit of raising awareness of the aims, intended outcomes and possibilities for linking the learning with all staff. It would also enable all staff to develop their own musical skills and knowledge and have a go at playing the instruments.

Awareness of Building Brass within the Music Education Hubs (MEH) community has increased over time and MPN have been invited to share the project at networking events locally and regionally. The Northern Bridge organisations invited MPN to a networking meeting in Manchester to talk about the inclusion of Arts Award as a feature of the project and Music Mark, the professional body which support Music Education Hubs, visited one of the Bedlington Schools to observe their brass provision as an example of good practice.

The engagement of other partners has been crucial to the enrichment of Building Brass. bait is one of 21 Creative People and Places programmes across England. It works in partnership to support more people in South East Northumberland to create and take part in inspiring and high quality arts experiences. bait has supported Building Brass in many ways by linking and signposting the project to opportunities and other organisations that have been able to enhance the project. These have included: participation in workshops with Mnozil Brass – a high level brass performance group; The Miner's Picnic at Woodhorn Museum and participation in 'Reflective Connections' - a bespoke composition project where all the local brass bands and the mini-band pupils worked with composer Lucy Pankhurst, on a commissioned piece. This was performed at The Miner's Picnic in 2016 and included all the

pupils from the first access whole class brass as well. One significant outcome of this was the formation of a working group called 'Brass Marras,' which meets regularly to discuss the future development of brass bands within the area.

Other effective partnerships have included 'Brass in Concert' – who organise an annual event at Sage Gateshead showcasing brass bands. This includes workshops for the pupils with Cory Band and a performance on the concourse of Sage Gateshead. In 2016 one school attended this event and in 2017, five schools attended.

#### **4. Online/websites**

A variety of online forums were explored for evidence of an online presence for the project. Forums searched included individual school websites, the Music Partnership North website, Youth Music Network, Vertu Motors and the Bedlington Youth and Community Band Facebook page.

#### **Findings**

There was a very limited presence of Building Brass on any of the school websites and any information found was related to the school mini-band – mostly to give times of rehearsals. One school had an item in their newsletter about the trip to Sage Gateshead for Brass in Concert. This article contained a link to Youth Music News. No information outlining Building Brass, what it is, who the funders are or MPN's involvement was visible on any of the school websites. One school in the Bedlington area, no longer participating in the project, had a small amount of information about the Bedlington Youth and Community Band in its local links.

In an Internet search, the websites which were found to have articles or information within them were: Vertu Motors (who sponsor the Bedlington Youth and Community Brass Band), Backworth Colliery Band, Bedlington Community Centre, The Morpeth Herald, Youth Music and the Bedlington Youth and Community Brass Band who have a Facebook page. Mention of Music Partnership North, or Youth Music was not always visible.

#### **5. Feedback and evaluations**

Feedback from training opportunities has been collected throughout the duration of the project. These were viewed and in certain cases discussed with individuals.

Feedback from students is collected in a variety of formats. Ongoing self-assessment takes place as pupils record their achievements on 'leaves,' which are then placed on 'tree' displays in school. They also plot their confidence, health and wellbeing levels by placing footprints along a line.

#### **6. YMCA video**

Northumberland YMCA in Ashington is collecting video evidence as the project develops. Where possible, they record every school project two or three times a year and include interviews with pupils and staff as well as clips of performances and rehearsals. A completed film, of approximately 1-hour duration, will be available at the end of the project. This will be distributed to all the project schools, Woodhorn Museum, Youth Music and MPN. It will be released at a special event to which all project partners, schools and council members will be invited. A shorter, 10min publicity film will also be shared and utilised in the application for future funding.

The collection of video evidence has been problematic at times due to the administration and organisation required to enable recording sessions to proceed i.e. gathering parental consent; communications between YMCA, schools and MPN; time, priorities and capacity within schools. However, the completed recording will form a significant part of the end report and reflection, as it should visually evidence the progress of the project over time.

## 7. Data collection

Participation data is collected as part of the reporting process for Youth Music as well as data for annual Music Education Hub returns. Key data for continuation of engagement is a major factor in determining success and value for money. This is also a major factor for schools in determining value and therefore allocation of funding.

Within the Bedlington area, the number of pupils accessing the mini-bands has increased overall during 2015 – 2017. The Ashington schools mini-band figures form their baseline, as mini-band data for 2017 – 18 will not be available until April 2018. Three schools in Bedlington have had a decline in mini-band membership. This is due to a range of factors discussed previously in this report.

When continuation figures for 2015-16 and 2016-17 in the Bedlington schools are compared, the overall percentage increase in mini-band access is 5.33%. This figure includes the schools where there was no increase or a decline.

Of the schools in Bedlington who showed an increase in continuation, the average is 8.23%

Continuation from first/primary to middle school is poor. There is currently no tracking of continuation data for high schools. Transition is an area that needs to be addressed as the pupils progress through the school tiers.

School	Whole class 14-15	Mini-band 15-16	Percentage continuation	Whole class 15-16	Mini-band 16-17	Percentage continuation	Whole class 16-17	Mini-band 17-18
Stead Lane	30	15	27.78%	24	18	33.96%	29	
Bedlington Station	31	8	12.9%	31	10	17.2%	27	
West End	58	16	15.24%	47	18	16.67%	61	
Whitley	53	22	21.36%	50	32	31.37%	52	
Cambois	12	10	35.71%	16	10	33.33%	14	
Choppington	25	12	30.77%	14	17	58.62%	15	
Ringway	36	18	27.27%	30	17	29.82%	27	
Mowbray	33	15	19.73%	43	23	25.00%	49	
Stakeford	24	18	36.73%	25	13	29.54%	19	
Meadowdale		12			10			
Ellington				22	18	35.29%	29	
Bothal				30	15	12.5%	90	
Linton				12	13	35.14%	15	
Pegswood				26	4	7.84%	25	
Central				29	11	18.64%	30	

*(The table above has been produced using a broader set of figures not shown here)*

NB: The numbers for the mini-bands include all pupils who have accessed the mini-bands over the course of the academic year irrespective of whether they remain in the band for the

full year. Pupils in year 3 are allowed to join the mini-band in the summer term, so are included in the percentage calculations for continuation, which is taken as a percentage of both whole class projects i.e. mini-band figures for 2015-16 as a percentage of whole class 2014-15 and 2015-16.

### **Key Findings:**

The success of the project (if success is measured in participation numbers and continuation rates) varies from school to school. Factors affecting this appear to be:

#### 1. Understanding of the intentions of this project and why it is happening within the school

- As this project has been taking place for a number of years, there have been ongoing changes in staffing, including changes of head teacher, and the outline and aspirations of the project haven't been sufficiently re-established.
- In schools where staffing has been consistent and the routine of the project is established, the original aspirations and intentions, though not forgotten, are un-refreshed.

#### 2. Understanding of the structure of the project and the progression routes available (in line with the NPME)

- See above
- Promotion of the project within the school and wider community isn't always apparent. Even in schools where the project is thriving, students and parents/carers aren't aware of the project structure and opportunities

#### 3. Understanding of the expectations of school and of MPN

- Schools where the project is most successful understand their commitment and the commitment given by MPN. A member of staff from school is embedded within the delivery of the project, learning alongside the children and supporting the music tutor. This is not often a staff member with previous musical experience and in some schools this has led to up-skilling of the staff member so that they feel confident to deliver other music lessons within the school. In one school practice sessions have taken place between scheduled mini band rehearsals, led by school staff.

#### 4. Active involvement of staff member from school within the first access whole class tuition and Mini-Bands

- See above
- Time and capacity within schools means that for some this is not a priority
- Some staff in some schools appear to place a lower value on music within the curriculum and perceive limited benefit for their pupils

#### 5. Promotion of the project within the school and wider community

- There is a very limited visible presence on school websites and where it is visible, there is no explanation of the project, and virtually no mention of the project title 'Building Brass.' The only school which has a brief on the Bedlington Community Band is no longer involved in delivery of the project, but mentions the band in its local links.

NB: Youth Music is the main funder for this project, but no communications from school that were seen mention this or carry a Youth Music logo. For funding bids to be successful it is imperative that funders are acknowledged.

## 6. Enthusiasm

- Where the benefit for pupils and the school is recognised, enthusiasm for the project maintains momentum and is valued.
- In schools where the project is most successful pupils are enthusiastic and can talk about their experience positively and look forward to the next steps.
- In schools where the project is most successful they proactively promote and celebrate their mini-band by allowing them opportunities to perform within the school and the community as well as participating in some of the extra opportunities offered through MPN such as performing at Sage Gateshead, Newcastle Cathedral and the Miner's Picnic at Woodhorn.

## 7. Consistency of staffing

- Where there have been changes of staffing, progression and momentum have been affected
- Where staffing between school tiers changes, pupils can become 'lost'

## 8. Administration of the project

- Due to the size and scope of this project, the overarching management of the detail is exceptionally time consuming and therefore some aspects of the project are prioritised
- Large and 'special' events enhance and enrich the project and the pupils' experiences. The schools and pupils who participate value these, but capacity means that opportunities are not always acted on, developed or planned.

## **Recommendations for MPN and Schools:**

- Re-establish the aims and aspirations of the project, particularly regarding the heritage of the local area
- Set clear expectations for what schools will receive from MPN and what is expected from schools in order for the project to be successful. Re-establish these commitments frequently. Working together with schools to establish a commitment framework may ensure that these are met. However, some expectations are set out in the National Plan for Music Education and are therefore essential.
- Establish which schools wish to continue moving forwards and have the capacity to do so in line with the above expectations. These schools should be included in future funding applications, but schools that cannot commit at present should be allowed to withdraw from the project to ensure value for money for funders. The option for pupils from all schools to learn within the trainer youth and community band, even if school is not directly engaged within the project should continue.

- Publicity of the project within schools and the wider community should be addressed. Some shared publicity items could be created that all schools can use within their websites. This would ensure consistency of information and branding and would help schools to populate their websites quickly.  
The creation of an information pamphlet for Building Brass would allow for distribution to parents/carers and would be available for new staff members. This could give a brief overview of the history and development of the project along with its aims and other relevant information. The pamphlet could also be distributed to local venues such as libraries and community centres.  
Although some performances have taken place, schools should think about celebrating and showcasing the mini-bands more, where opportunities allow, so that pupils and parents become more aware and supportive of the project  
By sharing resources between schools such as publicity items for websites, draft letters and leaflets, this may help with school capacity to promote the project and raise the profile.
- The schools value large events and extra experiences but these are heavy on administration time. Consider factoring more organisational time into further funding bids, and create a role for this.
- Reorganise music tutor staffing to allow for a clear progression route through different school tiers. This should ensure that fewer pupils are 'lost' through transition. NB: This is now in place for 2017-18. Data on this will be collected and reviewed in April 2018.
- Create contingency plans for when staff are absent/change within a school or MPN, particularly when a new head teacher is appointed.
- Remodel CPD for school-based staff to address attendance issues at CPD days. Consider taking CPD to the schools through attendance at staff meetings. This would raise general awareness and understanding with all staff in schools and could have a positive impact on the project within those schools as well enabling increased understanding of musical skills and knowledge.
- Review the structure of the project for future funding bids. This should include clear pathways for pupils moving through school tiers, particularly in their move to middle and high schools. Have increased dialogue with the high schools as to the best way to address this so that all pupils can continue where there is a wish for them to do so, irrespective of their background and circumstances.
- Share good practice more widely including on the Youth Music Website and in music education forums. Celebrate the project.
- Schools have acknowledged the positive impact on some of their SEND pupils. This isn't currently reflected in the data. Review the data collection processes currently in place to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the impact of this project including hard to reach groups. Also repeat the health and wellbeing questionnaire in order to compare with the initial collection of this.

## **Conclusion:**

The Building Brass project is at a point where it is necessary to decide on its future. In order for it to proceed, then this report should have shown evidence of an impact on pupils, schools and communities and for that impact to be great enough to warrant the amount of work that a project of this size requires.

In schools where the project is valued, the impact is evident and in some exceeds expectations. Pupils are enthused and engaged, teachers and teaching assistants are responding to the opportunities to learn and develop musically and tutors have positive working relationships and feel part of the school. Pupils are progressing and mini-bands are able to perform, thus enriching the life of the school. Where schools are taking advantage of the extra enrichment opportunities pupils are having new and exciting experiences which are celebrated.

A project of this size and scope requires a huge amount of planning and organisation behind the scenes therefore scarce resources of time and funding should be allocated by MPN where outcomes will be greatest. If schools are reluctant participants they should be allowed to withdraw from the project.

The next phase of Building Brass should focus on the pathways beyond first and primary school. The middle and high schools have a large number of pupils moving through with increased musical skills and knowledge, which should impact on their music curriculum teaching and learning. There is the opportunity for these schools to have their own brass bands and parents have expressed a wish for this.

If Building Brass receives the funding necessary to proceed it has the potential to become a musical progression route through which pupils can achieve their potential, learn about their local heritage and become embedded and valued within the communities where they live.

December 2017

Jill Walker  
Music Education Consultant