

# TELLING TALES

Evaluation Report

Olivia Lawson

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Nottingham Community Music

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# **1. CONTEXT**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Telling Tales was an Early Years music making and training project intended for young children (aged 2.5 to 5 years), Early Years practitioners and parents from three Early Years settings in Nottingham. Funded by Youth Music, it took place between September 2010 and July 2011 and provided a series of sessions in each setting which, in addition to singing and instrument work, focused on the use of music technology to encourage children's creativity within the context of telling and creating stories. As well as aiming to provide a high quality musical and educational experience for young children, the programme provided skills sharing and training opportunities for non-specialist Early Years practitioners to enable them to continue to deliver music and music technology activities in their setting. It also offered professional development for a trainee music leader and encouraged the support and involvement of parents-.

Developed and led by Project Leader, Mat Andasun, the project built on the experience of previous programmes delivered over a number of years and also responded to the findings of a focus group concerning Early Years music making hosted by Youth Music. This influenced the project in two significant ways. Firstly the number of sessions delivered in each setting was increased (from 6 to 12) in order to provide more sustained experiences for children and to support their progression and development more effectively. Secondly reflective and systematic monitoring and evaluation were embedded into the development and delivery of the project from the outset. Informed by the project aim and intended outcomes (see below), their main purpose was to explore the extent to which these were met, to develop professional practice and also to provide robust evidence about the effects of both music making and the use of music technology with very young children. This report presents the findings of the evaluation process which is explained in more detail below.

## **1.2 Project aim**

The overall aim of the project was as follows:

- To advance the learning and development of children aged 2.5 to 5 years old from Nottingham by ensuring universal access to quality music-making activities including the use of music technology at three Children's Centres where no such music making has taken place before.

## **1.3 Intended project outcomes**

The intended project outcomes were to have:

- increased the musical skills of the children taking part;
- increased the facility amongst the children to use the music technology software creatively;
- developed a language and understanding amongst the children and practitioners around the analysis and manipulation of sound;
- increased language acquisition, particularly through storytelling;
- improved the children's social and psychological well being by noting changes to listening skills, concentration, participation, co-operation and self-confidence;
- invested in the skills base of the practitioners, trainee and parent volunteers;
- created a body of robust evidence about the effects of both music making and the use of technology with very young children.

## 1.4 Project team and partners

Project Leader	Mat Andasun, Nottingham Community Music
Trainee	Kirstin Baxter
Project Partners	Nottingham City Council Children's Services Nottingham Community Music
Project Funder	Youth Music
Monitoring and Evaluation	Olivia Lowson

## 1.5 Early Years settings

The project involved groups of children, practitioners and parents based at Sure Start Children's Centres in different parts of Nottingham. Chosen in consultation with Nottingham City Council, the opportunity to participate was initially offered to three Centres (Clifton Children's Centre, Greenfields Nursery at Bilborough Children's Centre and The Meadows Children's Centre) who had onsite day provision, had not been involved in previous projects and were located in different areas of need. Each setting had some music making in place, but this was limited in scope and predominantly singing. Unfortunately staffing challenges and difficulties in recruiting and retaining participants were encountered at The Meadows which led to the project being terminated after a few sessions and subsequently offered to Hyson Green Children's Centre in a different area of the city.

More detailed information about the three settings who completed the project is outlined below:

### ***Clifton Children' Centre*** (referred to as Clifton)

Clifton provides a range of services and opportunities for children and families in the Clifton area of Nottingham. It is located in an area ranked amongst the worst 50% nationally with regard to multiple urban deprivation (English Indices of Deprivation 2004) and with a predominantly White British community. There is a mix of families attending the Centre including some from more affluent backgrounds, some experiencing deprivation and some from other ethnic backgrounds including Polish, Afro-Caribbean and Asian.

The group of children and parents participating was drawn together specifically for the project and recruited through promotion to local schools and nurseries and also via referrals from settings. The socio-economic and cultural mix of the Centre was reflected in the make up of the group (see table below).

### ***Greenfields Nursery at Bilborough Children's Centre*** (referred to as Greenfields)

Greenfields is an independent day nursery located in Greenfields and Bilborough Children's Centre in the Bilborough area of Nottingham and provides low cost affordable childcare for local parents who are in training or employment. It is located in an area ranked amongst one of the 30% most deprived wards in the country. The majority of families are White British and the remainder are from other ethnic backgrounds including Eastern European, Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean.

The group of children participating were selected on the basis of their age and represented a broad ethnic mix and were all part of the state funded NEF (National Education Funded) programme supporting Early Years provision for working families.

**Hyson Green and New Basford Children’s Centre** (referred to as Hyson Green)

As indicated, Hyson Green was late entering the project and invited to participate following the withdrawal of The Meadows Children’s Centre. It is located in an area with wards amongst the 10% most deprived within the country. The majority of families using the centre are from black and minority ethnic groups with a growing number from Eastern European countries.

The group of children participating was drawn together specifically for the project and recruited via other groups including a Sure Start library Rhythm and Rhyme session. The recruitment process was challenging however as families were reluctant to get involved despite encouragement of Centre staff (see also later in the report). The children were from a range of ethnic backgrounds and some were younger than the target age range.

**Setting/group data**

The table below provides a summary profile of each of the participating groups

	No of children participating	Age min in yrs	Age max in yrs	% EAL	Ethnicity	Socio/economic characteristics	No of staff	No of parents
Clifton Children’s Centre	5	2	4	20	1 Polish, 4 White British	2 children from deprived circumstances	4	5
Greenfields Day Nursery	10	2	4	40	Czech, Indian, Afro-Caribbean, Polish, African	From working families earning a range of incomes	3	1
Hyson Green and New Basford Children’s Centre	7	1.5	4	86	Pakistani, Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, White British	Mainly recent arrivals to the UK with parents wanting to work or study	2	8

**1.6 Project outline and delivery**

The project spanned a nine month period between September 2010 and July 2011. After initial practitioner training in September 2010, 12 sessions were delivered at Greenfields and Clifton between September and December 2010 with follow up practitioner training in the middle of these. Training for The Meadows took place in December 2010 and sessions commenced in January 2011 but ceased in March as a result of the aforementioned difficulties. Practitioner training and sessions took place in the new setting, Hyson Green, between April and July 2011 and followed a similar pattern to the previous settings although with slightly fewer sessions (10). A brief summary of the key elements is as follows:

- An initial training session for participating setting practitioners provided an introduction to the project and an evaluation briefing. The session also focused on leading warm ups (vocal and physical); project songs and how to lead them; leading instrument work; story creation and story telling; recording, sampling and editing sounds and adding them to narrative and stories. An interim follow up training session provided opportunities for practitioners to reflect on, consolidate and follow up the initial training and to consider how these were working within the context of the project.

- Weekly one hour sessions at each setting comprising: physical and vocal warm ups; singing specially composed interactive action songs; instrument work including call and response, polyrhythm and improvisation; use of music technology in encouraging children's creativity through sound creation and manipulation within the context of other project activities; and storytelling used as an inspiration for children to create their own new sounds and as a framework within which to place them. It was hoped the music technology work would involve a newly developed software programme suitable for independent use by young children but because of financial constraints this was not possible and a previous combination of software programmes had to be used. This is explained in more detail later in the report.

## 1.7 Evaluation methodology

### ***Purpose***

Evaluation and reflection were embedded into the planning and development of the project from the outset. As indicated above, their main purpose was to measure achievement of project aims, objectives and outcomes and also to provide robust evidence of the effects of music making and use of music technology with very young children.

### ***Method detail***

The evaluation methodology was developed and undertaken by an external evaluator in consultation with the Project Leader. A briefing document was drawn up for settings with detailed instructions as to how this should be implemented which was explained during the pre project practitioner training. A summary of the approaches involved is as follows:

***Music environment rating scale*** (based on a scale developed by Dr Susan Young, University of Exeter and used with her permission)

This is a basic tool that was used for assessing change in music provision (quantity, frequency and range) over the duration of the project in each setting (see Appendix 1) It was completed by each setting at the start and conclusion of the project. Underlying its use was the idea that that any change in music provision at a setting is also more likely to have a longer term effect on the musical experience of children beyond the life of the project itself.

### ***Background material***

A range of background material relating to the project was collected and information relevant to the evaluation was extracted and analysed.

### ***Reflective practice and action research***

A reflective practice approach with an action research element was at the centre of the project. The specific action research was:

*To establish an understanding and mastery of music technology in the Early Years.*

A range of reflective practice documentation methods were used including: session reflection sheets (completed by leaders and practitioners during session debriefings whilst reflecting on activities, practice and children's responses); observations of children; video/photographic data; and feedback from parents.

### ***Tracking individual children***

The engagement and progress of two children from each setting were tracked during the project. Although it was intended to be a random sample, some settings chose specific children according to their different attendance, age and stages of development. Appendix 2 provides some basic background information on each child. Within the report the six children will be referred to as Clifton Child A, Clifton Child B, Greenfields Child C, Greenfields Child D, Hyson Green Child E and Hyson Green Child F. Overall the sample of children reflected a spread of age (2 years 1 month to 3 years 11 months) and ethnicity with five speaking English as an additional language (EAL). Also five of the children were female. Most children attended the majority of sessions although one child, Clifton Child C, missed 4 out of 11 sessions towards the end of the project. The completion of the scale was undertaken correctly in most cases; however, there are gaps in data for one child (Hyson Green Child F) which has resulted in an incomplete picture for some areas.

The tracking process focused on four areas of development directly linked with project activities and intended outcomes: music technology skills, musical skills (singing and playing instruments), language and communication skills and personal and social skills. Whilst it is not intended to assert that any changes in the latter two areas of development are directly attributable to project participation (this would require a more rigorous approach beyond the scope of the project), it will be interesting to see if there any significant changes during the project.

The tracking methodology involved a combination of observation, video/photography and a Child Development Rating Scale (CDRS). The latter was used to make a basic measurement of a child's attainment against a range of indicators for the four key areas above at the beginning, middle and end of the project (see Appendix 3). The indicators for language/communication and personal/social development drew directly on the Early Years Foundation Stage Goals for these areas.

Each indicator was measured against a 5 point scale as follows:

Level 1	No progress towards achieving the indicator
Level 2	Minimal progress towards achieving the indicator
Level 3	Some progress towards achieving the indicator
Level 4	Substantial progress towards achieving the indicator
Level 5	Indicator achieved fully

The scale was completed by the same practitioner in each setting without reference to any of the previous completed scales. As with the MERS, this was to avoid a tendency to automatically upgrade every indicator.

### ***Observation of children's engagement and responses***

Using session observation sheets, participating children were observed during sessions by practitioners to document their responses and also provide evidence of any significant attainment, progression and development. Observations focused particularly on individual children being tracked (see below) but also other participating children. Practitioners were also encouraged to link their observations to the key indicators in the child skill development rating scale.

### ***Video data***

This was used to record and document children's participation in activities and their progression and development, particularly of those being tracked.

## 2. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 2.1 The Music Environment Rating Scale

As outlined above, a key aim of the project was to advance the learning and development of young children in each setting by providing them with quality musical activity and experiences including music technology. The MERS is a scale (developed by Dr Susan Young, University of Exeter and used with her permission) which measures music provision within each setting and through use of sets of pre-determined criteria assesses whether any changes occurred by the end of the project. It includes areas of provision that can be objectively assessed and are generally regarded as playing a key role in providing quality musical experiences for children. For example, practitioners who know a good range of songs and can lead them confidently by the end of the project are also more likely to be able to provide quality singing experiences for young children in the longer term. It is assumed therefore that any positive changes that took place are likely to be as a result of the project. Whilst it should be remembered that two of the groups (at Clifton and Hyson Green) were set up specifically for the project and did not continue afterwards, the scale actually reflects wider provision in both settings and therefore gives an indication of how any changes might affect the quality of provision in the longer term.

It was intended that the MERS would be completed on both occasions by the same person without reference to previous scores in order to achieve a certain level of consistency. Although settings were clearly briefed in this respect, this approach appears to have only been implemented in one setting (Hyson Green). In the other two settings, the pre and post project scale seem to have been completed by different people therefore potentially reducing the consistency of response. This may account for the unexpected decrease in one or two areas of provision at these settings.

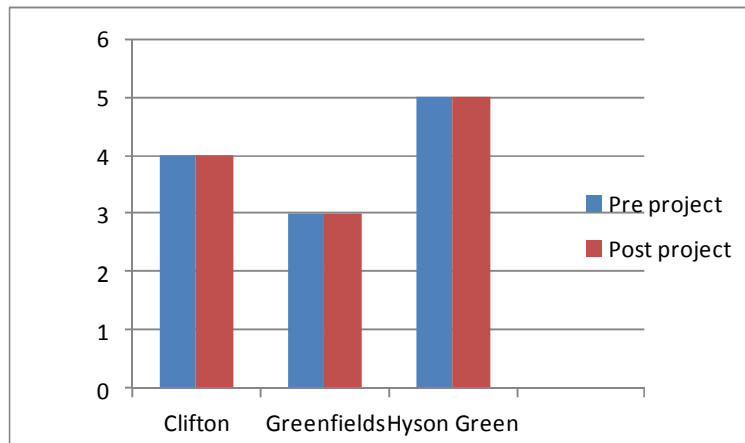
The scale also relies on perceptions of individual practitioners and there may be a tendency for them to 'elevate' their practice, particularly when they know it is being evaluated. Another potential problem is when scores allocated at the beginning of the project are high, the score recorded at the end of the project may not indicate much improvement. This appears to be the case with some areas of the scale in all settings. However, this does not mean that the settings did not benefit from or enjoy participating or that change did not take place, just that it was not possible to quantify these aspects using this measure. Other elements of the evaluation process (e.g. interviews) provide further information in this respect.

The findings across the 3 settings are discussed below. The graphs are presented using a scale of 1 to 5 which corresponds with the five possible 'levels' of provision in ascending order.

#### ***Musical Instruments***

No musical instruments	4 or 5 small instruments – not in good condition (or lots of small 'one each' instruments)	Reasonable number of instruments in reasonable condition – some tuned and untuned	Many instruments, tuned and untuned, in good condition (and correct beaters/strikers available)	Generous number and range of instruments, including tuned, untuned, representing a variety of musical traditions and kept in good condition,
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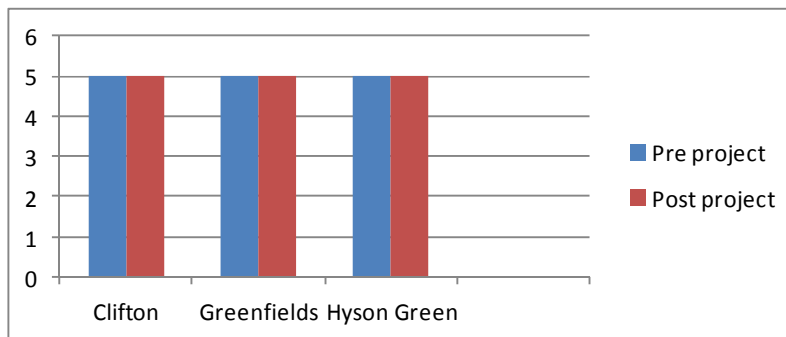




The graph shows no change in provision of instruments by the end of the project in any of the settings. However, it does indicate that the quality and range of instruments available at Hyson Green and Clifton was already good at the outset and this was backed up by practitioners and also observations by the evaluator. In addition, both of these settings had a sensory room which staff felt linked well with the instrumental music making aspects of the project. Provision at Greenfields was reasonable but less varied than the other two settings which probably reflects financial constraints. During the project instruments in each setting were also supplemented by a good quality and varied set of instruments provided by the Project Leader including large instruments from different musical traditions and a wide range of smaller hand held instruments. Furthermore, the value of working with high quality, varied and engaging instruments was emphasised by the Project Leader during the initial practitioner training session and this was acknowledged by most practitioners.

***How the instruments are set out***

None – so not set out	Not accessible to children and, rarely brought out	Sometimes accessible to children	Set out to be accessible, but the arrangement never varies	Set out to be accessible and the set-ups are varied regularly
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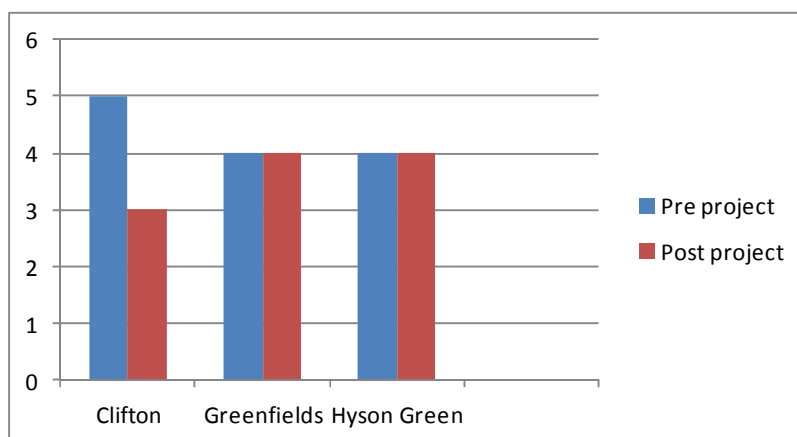


The graph again shows no change, but all settings scored at the highest level both pre and post project. This was also backed up by practitioner interviews who indicated that instruments were always accessible during Early Years activities/groups at each setting and that they were regularly set up in varied ways. At Greenfields practitioners indicated that instruments were available at all times for children to engage in free play activity supported by responsive staff. Hyson Green also indicated that the project had helped to reinforce the value of presenting

and making instruments accessible to children in interesting ways. This was evident during sessions observed, when children were encouraged to find and choose instruments that were presented in different and engaging ways including under a bright cloth or inside a large colourful box.

**Equipment for playing recorded music**

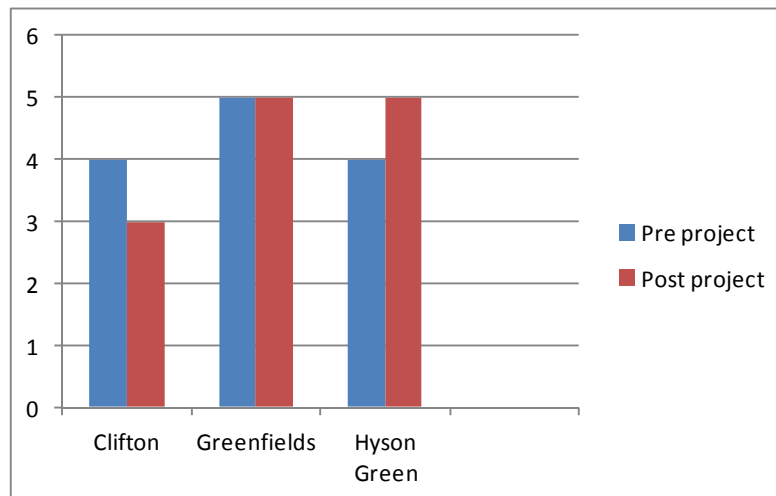
No equipment for playing recorded music	Old cassette or CD player – poor quality sound  Used less than once a week	Reasonable quality cassette or CD cassette player  Sometimes used – about once a week	Good quality CD player, with larger or separate speakers that produce good quality sound Used often (2/3 times per week)	Very good, CD player, good quality – in very accessible position, where children can use it too. In very frequent use
-----------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



The graph shows no change across two settings (Greenfields and Hyson Green) which is not surprising given the financial requirements necessary to achieve any further improvement. However both settings appear to possess existing good quality equipment which is used regularly each week and bodes well for providing quality experiences for children in the longer term. The quality of equipment at Clifton surprisingly changes from very good at the start to reasonable post project which represents quite a significant decrease. However, it seems unlikely that this anomaly is attributable to the project and is more likely to reflect differing perceptions of the two people completing the scale each time.

**Resources for listening (Cassettes, CDs)**

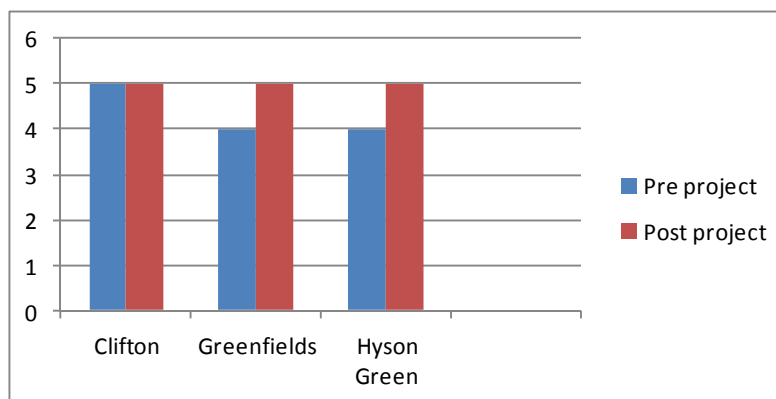
No resources for listening	A few nursery rhyme cassettes – rarely played	Some cassettes/CDs (less than 10) predominantly nursery rhymes or children’s music. Used about once a week	Several CDs/cassettes – more than 10 representing different musical styles. Used often (2/3 times per week)	Large, varied selection CDs for listening to – including wide range of styles, pop, classical, ‘world’ etc. Used frequently.
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Only one setting (Hyson Green) shows a clear increase in the quality and range of CDs for listening to provision moving from a score 4 to score 5 and offering a large varied CD selection used frequently. Greenfields shows no change but maintains high quality provision (score 5) across the project. There is again a decrease in provision at Clifton, possibly for similar reasons above, rather than an actual decline in quality. Using a wide variety of recorded music is an accessible and achievable way for settings to provide children with quality musical experiences and overall this seems to have been recognised by at least two of the settings.

**Group song singing**

No singing	Singing occasionally – perhaps once a week or less	Singing once or twice a week	Singing most days for a short period of time (e.g. 5 minutes) with some music activities related to the songs (mostly actions)	Singing every day (10 minutes or more, more than once a day) with varied music activities related to the songs
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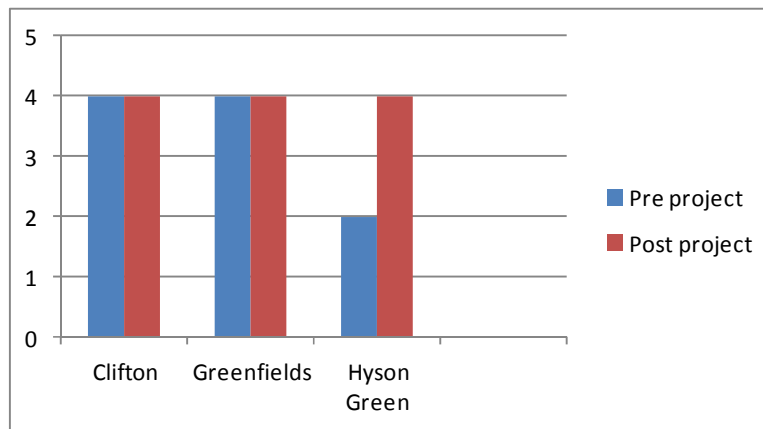


This graph shows that all settings commenced the project with a high score for group song singing, 4 in the case of Greenfields and Hyson Green and 5 for Clifton. As group song singing is an established part of Early Years practice, this was not surprising. The value and use of singing

in all settings was also evident in the practitioner interviews. Some practitioners at both Hyson Green and Clifton had received training to support the delivery of singing activity and sessions including from PEEP (Parents Early Education Partnership) and as a result were able to deliver dedicated singing sessions and/or integrate singing into other sessions. It is encouraging that both Greenfields and Hyson Green increased their scores to 5 by the end of the project and it is likely this reflects a positive change resulting from the strong emphasis on group singing in every session, the linked training for practitioners and the repertoire of specially composed songs.

**Who takes group song singing?**

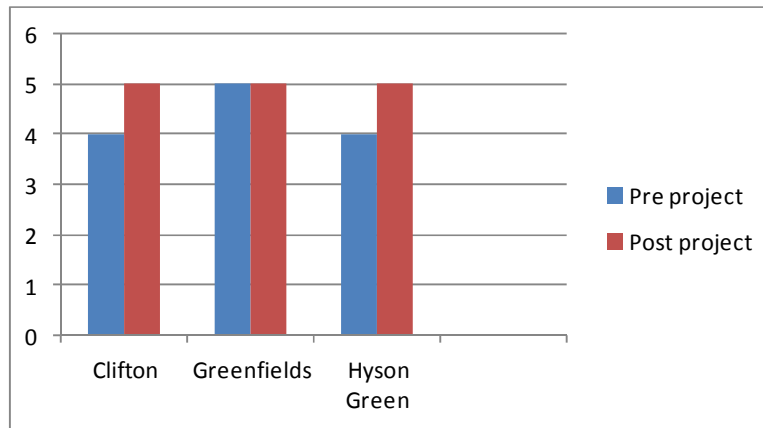
No one takes song singing	One member of staff always takes song-singing	Most members of staff sing and lead song-singing – but not all.	All staff lead songs – but some less confident than others and know fewer songs	All staff equally confident, song singing is shared and all can sing several songs
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Although group singing is a widely valued aspect of Early Years education, not all practitioners feel confident to lead this activity. It is therefore encouraging that two settings, Clifton and Greenfields, maintained a high score (4) indicating that all staff were involved in leading group singing, although varying in confidence. There was also a significant change at Hyson Green which started with a lower score (2 – i.e., only one practitioner leading group song singing) but increased to 4 by the end of the project. Practitioner interviews indicate that the training and modelling provided by the Project Leader had a significant effect on their confidence to lead singing.

**Songs as part of everyday**

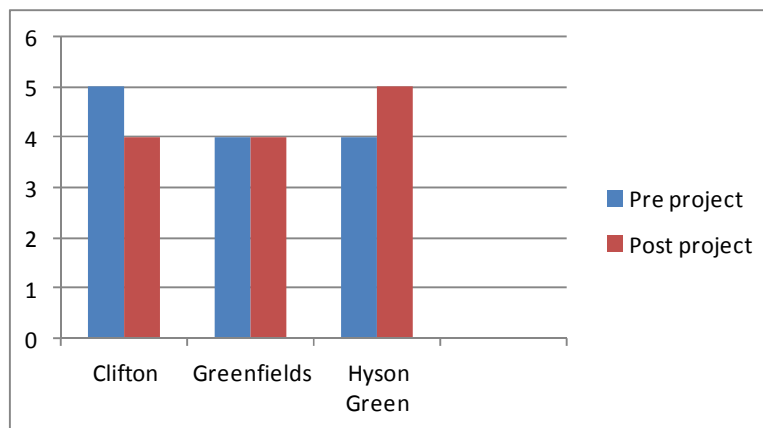
No song singing as part of everyday activity	Children are rarely supported in singing as part of everyday activity	Occasional 'everyday' singing – one or two regular songs	'Everyday' singing is a regular part of practice – some familiar songs for routines (e.g. tidying up, changing -)	Everyday singing is embedded in practice – known and made-up songs for all kinds of activities.
----------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



The integration of singing into everyday activities in Early Years settings is generally much less frequent than group singing activities. However the graph shows that all of the settings were already working in this way at the start of the project. Greenfields scored at the highest level across the project indicating that everyday singing is embedded into practice for all kinds of activities. A practitioner from Greenfields drew attention to the setting’s free-play ethos and also that staff were encouraged to be responsive to children’s musical play including through singing. By the conclusion of the project both Clifton and Hyson Green indicated change in this area and that they were also working at the highest level with everyday singing embedded into their practice.

**Song repertoire**

No song singing	Up to four songs, always the same – familiar nursery rhymes	Several songs – between five and ten. Never changing.	A good repertoire of songs – about 10 or more. Quite varied.	A very wide repertoire of songs, including songs from other cultures, which is continually being added to
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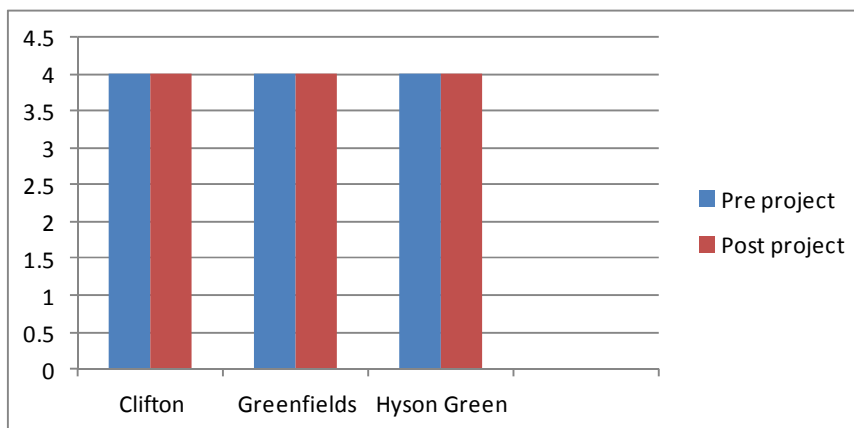


Two settings (Greenfields and Hyson Green) started the project indicating a varied repertoire of at least 10 songs and Clifton (scoring 5) indicated a very wide and growing repertoire including songs from other cultures. Given the strong emphasis on singing and the introduction of a

number of new songs, it is quite surprising therefore that only one setting, Hyson Green showed a further increase in its repertoire of songs (scoring 5) at the conclusion of the project. Greenfields maintained the same level and Clifton decreased to a score of 4. Once again, this could reflect the completion of the scale by two different practitioners.

**Adding actions and activities to the songs**

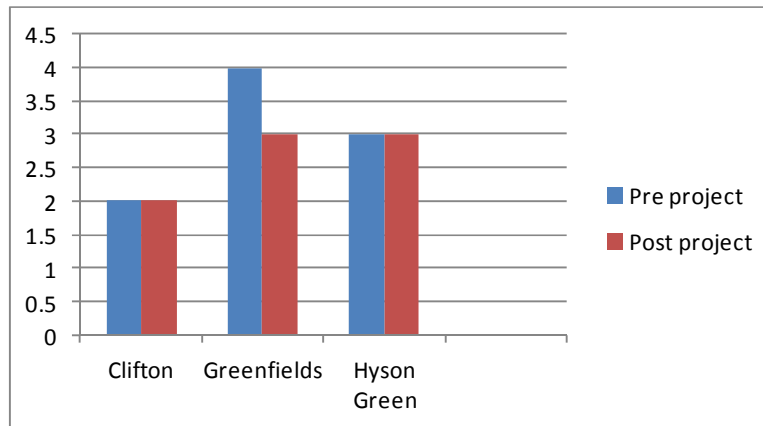
No song singing	Some simple actions to the songs – mostly simple finger movements	Several different actions and activities to go with songs.	A good repertoire of activities to go with songs – involving actions and instruments.	A wide repertoire of activities to go with songs involving movements, dramatisations, instruments and other props
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The use of actions and activities when singing is again common in Early Years education and can help not only in the learning of musical aspects such as tempo, dynamics and pace but also support other areas of learning and development such as language, numeracy, expressive and motor skills. Although the graph shows no change during the project, all settings score at the highest level at both the start and completion of the project indicating use of a wide repertoire of activities and actions with songs. Although not evident in the scale, the project has undoubtedly extended their existing repertoire even further through introduction of a number of new songs integrating actions, children’s responses and use of instruments.

**Dance/movement to music (including dance to songs, or traditional children’s circle games)**

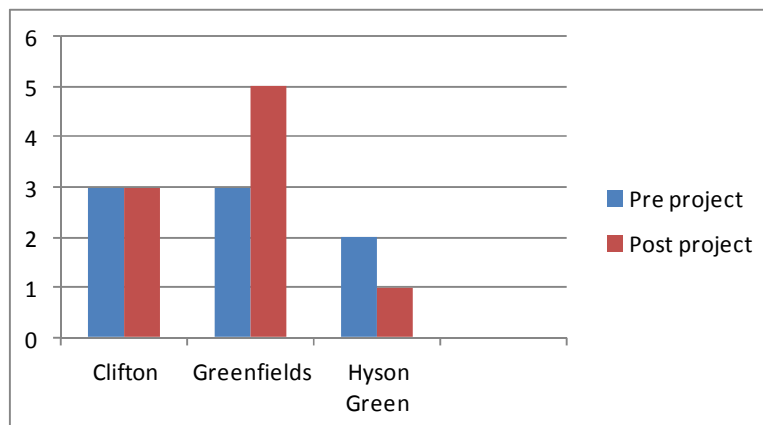
No dance and/or movement to music. No space available	Occasional dance and/or movement to music - less than once a week	Dance and/or movement to music once or twice a week	Dance /move to music frequently – with some variety of music, activities etc.	Dance or move to music or songs every day – special provision made for dancing, with equipment
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Moving and dancing to music is another important aspect of Early Years practice and can support aspects of musical learning such as rhythm and pace and also other areas of development such as self expression and physical co-ordination. The graph does not show an increase of dance/movement provision in any of the settings which is not surprising given the stronger focus on singing, instrument work, music technology and story telling. However all settings indicate that they do offer this either occasionally (Clifton) or fairly regularly (Hyson Green and Greenfields). The slight decrease at Greenfields but may be due to differing practitioner interpretations of the time of completion.

### **Music technology (computer software)**

No computer	A computer, but no music activity software	Software on the computer for music, but never or rarely used	One or more computers with software for music, used occasionally	More than one computers with software for music, used regularly
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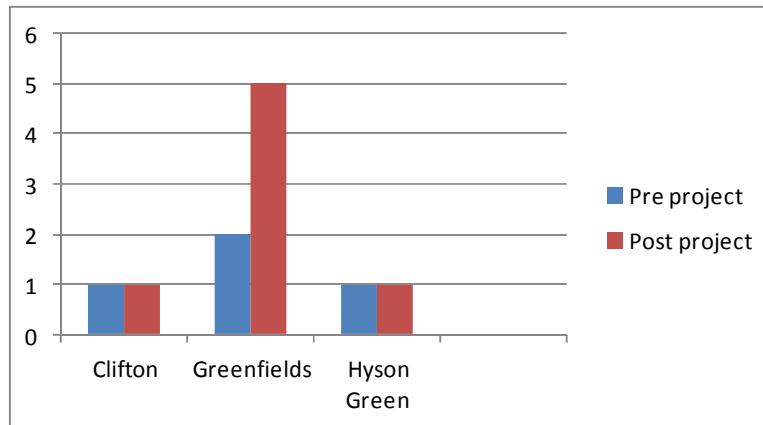


Given the strong focus of the project on music technology and also the provision of resources and equipment for continued use afterwards (each setting was given the project software, a keyboard, microphone and speakers), some of the post project scores are quite surprising at first glance. There was no change at Clifton which maintained a score 3 indicating availability of a computer and software but rarely used. However practitioner interviews indicated a clear intention to build on the project and the skills and experience gained subject to being able to achieve an appropriate staffing ratio that could support such activity. Similarly, whilst the Hyson Green score decreased from 2 (a computer with no music activity software) to 1 (no computer), interviews indicated that the setting does have the necessary equipment and was

hoping to continue with some music technology work. In addition, there was also an intention to link music technology activities with the facilities provided in the sensory room. The decrease may be down to the fact that the software could only be installed on one laptop in the setting and this became inaccessible after the project ended as the practitioner responsible went on sick leave. It appears therefore that Greenfields was the only setting where there was evidence of genuine change with the score increasing significantly from 3 before the project (computer and software available but rarely used) to 5 after the project (both computer and software regularly used). This level of change was also backed up by practitioners who indicated that the project had significantly increased their skills and given them the confidence to continue using music technology equipment and delivering regular activities. It was also encouraging to learn that during the project, they had replicated what they had learnt with other children in the setting. The music technology aspect of the project is explored in more detail later in the report.

**Who supervises the music technology?**

No staff involvement	Staff members switch on the computer and then leave children alone.	Staff members switch on the computer and help children on request.	Staff members remain with children to help them on request.	Staff members play an active and present part in the children’s interactions with the computer.
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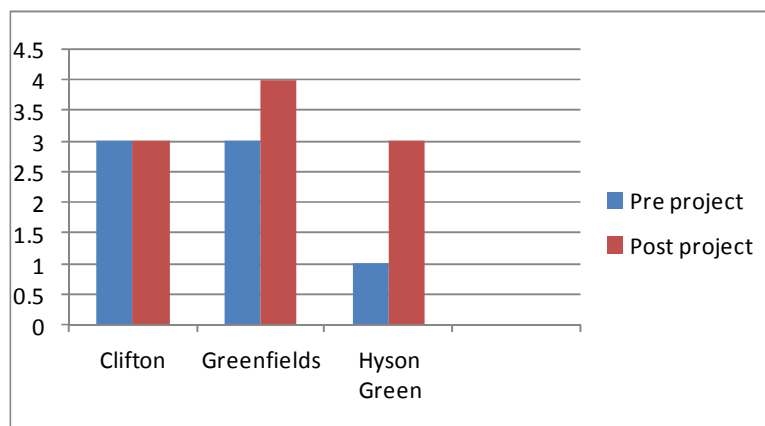


Based on the trends and findings described above this graph is less surprising. It shows a score 1 (no staff involvement) maintained across the project at both Clifton and Hyson Green but a clear change at Greenfields with the score increasing from 2 (staff members switch on the computer but leave children alone) to 5 (staff members play an active and present part in children’s interactions with the computer). As indicated previously, despite the low score, staff at both Hyson Green and Clifton indicated an encouraging intention to build on the project and, subject to appropriate staffing and opportunities to include music technology activities with other groups. Greenfields indicated that the practitioners involved in the project would in future continue to support children’s interactions with the computer and, furthermore, would be given appropriate staff support to be able to do this.



## Outdoor musical opportunities

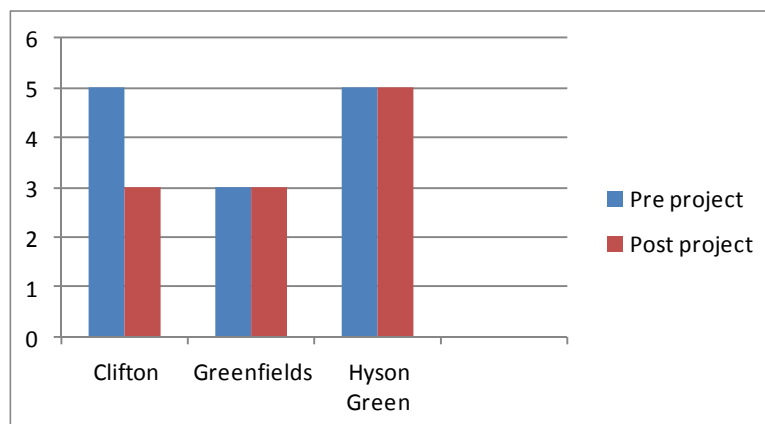
No outdoor musical instruments	Instruments are set up out-of-doors rarely	Quite often instruments are put out of doors	Outdoor musical play with instruments is always provided for (may include an outdoor installation – but is it used and is it in good condition?)	Interesting, outdoor musical installation, used frequently and other outdoor music play opportunities
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Whilst there was no emphasis on outdoor musical opportunities during the project, it is interesting that two settings (Greenfields and Hyson Green) show significant change in this respect at the end of the project. Hyson Green scored 1 (no outdoor musical opportunities) at the outset and 3 (instruments put outdoors quite often) at the project conclusion. Greenfields increased from a score of 3 to a score 4 (outdoor musical play always provided) at the end of the project. Although there is no direct reference to this during practitioner interviews, in view of the focus on instrumental work and the availability of high quality instruments, it is possible that these aspects of the project did have a bearing on the positive change in both settings.

## Parental involvement in music

No parental involvement	Parents know about music from 'profiles' or displays but don't join in the music	Occasional parental involvement – mostly special events	Frequent parental involvement in music	Parents involved in musical activity on every occasion
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The active involvement of parents in the project at two settings (Hyson Green and Clifton) in the project is clearly reflected in the maintained score of 5 at Hyson Green (parents involved on every occasion). However the decrease at Clifton from a score of 5 to a score of 3 (some involvement – mainly at special events) does not quite correlate with the reality but perhaps reflects the less active role of parents in the later sessions. There was little direct parental involvement at Greenfields as this setting was providing day-care for children of working parents but interviews indicated that parents were kept well informed about the project and this is reflected in the pre and post project scores.

### ***Summary of findings in relation to aim***

Overall, the scores given in the above sections were either greater than, or equal to the starting score in most cases. The few anomalous scores are not a major concern as the decrease was not marked and may also reflect an inconsistency in the practitioners completing the MERS. Whilst there was perhaps not as much change as expected overall, the project appears to have brought about positive developments in most aspects of singing (group song singing, who takes singing and everyday singing) and also outdoor musical play with instruments which, as mentioned above, possibly reflects the strong focus on instrumental work. In some other areas, although there was no change as such, a high level of provision was maintained (for example in the way instruments were set out). Furthermore, whilst it was surprising (given the focus of the project) that only one setting showed a change in music technology provision, there were encouraging signs that the other two were hoping to build on this aspect of the project in future. Therefore the overall outcome was that the project helped to maintain and in many cases, increase the quality of music provision in each of the participating settings which in turn should enhance the quality of musical experience for the children in the longer term.

## **2.2 Child Development Outcomes**

The following sections of the report focus on those outcomes concerned with the four areas children's development (musical skills – both singing and instrument work, music technology skills, language development and social and psychological well being) and consider the extent to which they were achieved by the conclusion of the project. Each section includes a brief overview of the linked project activities, an analysis of the relevant CDRS scores for each tracked child supported by further evidence from observations, interviews and video footage about both the tracked and other children.

### **2.2.1 Increased musical skills (Singing)**

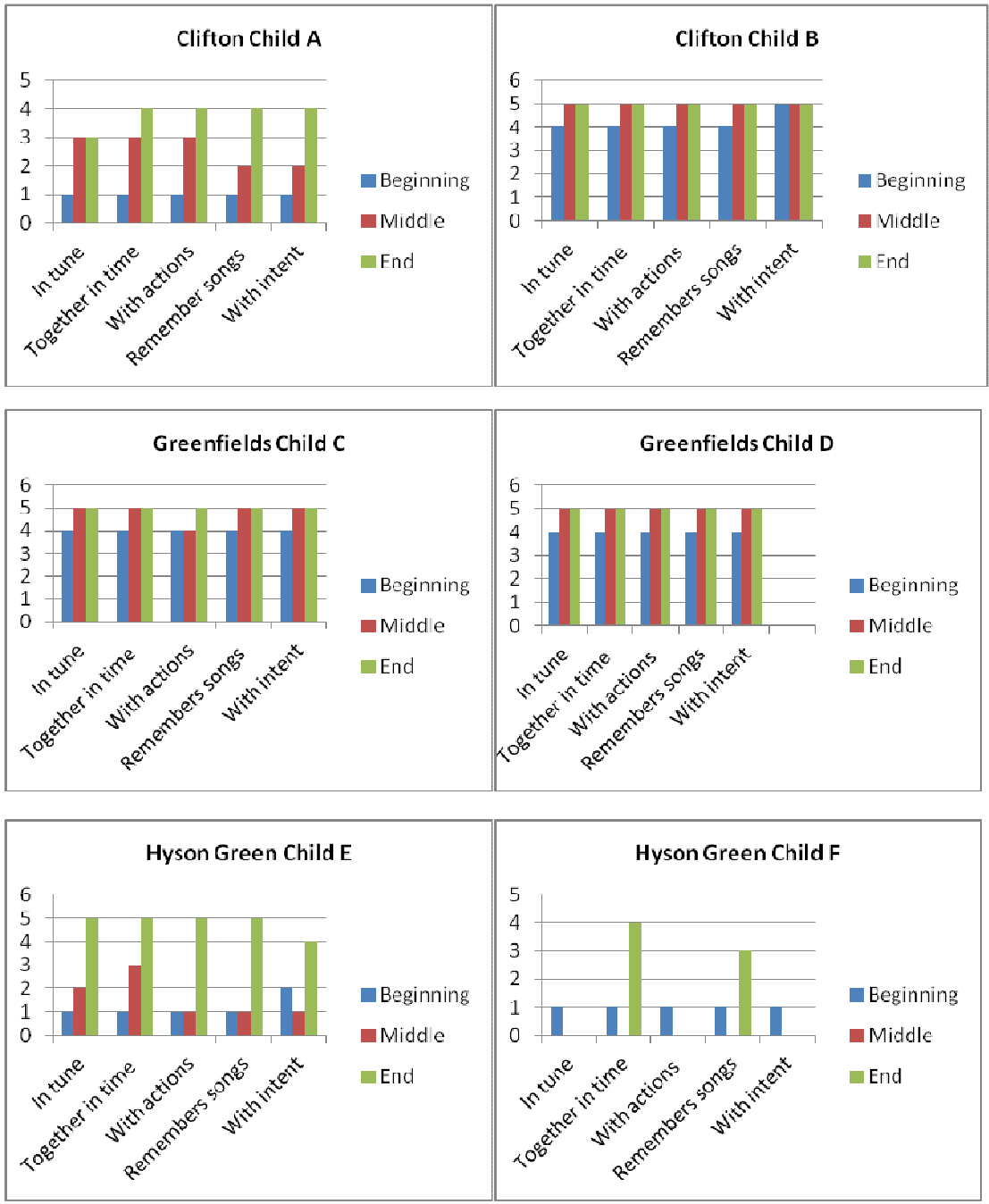
Singing and the development of singing skills were a key project focus and as the MERS shows, the importance and value of their role within Early Years practice seemed well understood by each setting. During the project, children were introduced to a range of new songs and alongside this practitioners were provided with training and a CD resource to enable them to lead and develop these and other songs in their settings. Most of the songs were composed by the Project Leader including two that were created during the project directly in response to session stories. All were carefully conceived to be appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children and were sung in a key (D major or minor) that was at a suitable pitch for children's voices and contained simple but engaging melodies and lyrics. All the songs were interactive and involved actions, activities and opportunities for children to use their imagination and contribute or invent their own ideas.

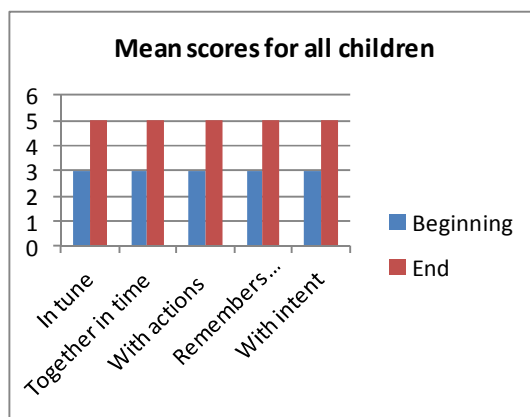
### Analysis of CDRS scores

The following graphs give an indication of how the singing skills of the tracked children appear to have progressed during the project. Each child was scored at three points in the project (beginning, middle and end) against the following indicators:

- Can sing in tune
- Can sing together in time
- Can add actions whilst continuing to sing
- Can sing simple songs from memory
- Sings with intent (effortful, engaged, confident singing)

The final graph presents the mean scores (rounded to the nearest decimal point) against each indicator at the beginning and end of the project to show the overall rate of change.





The graphs show all tracked children individually improving their scores for each indicator by the end of the project. The mean scores for all indicators increase from between Level 3 to Level 4, indicating steady progression collectively and an overall increase in their singing skills. Individually, the level and pace of change is variable but this not surprising given their different ages and experience. It is particularly encouraging that Child A and E who scored Level 1 across all indicators at the start, each went on to score Level 4 and 5 (full achievement of the indicator) respectively for four of the five indicators on completion. This suggests significant progression and development during the project. It is also interesting that the pattern of change for Child E shows a more dramatic increase towards the end of the project which could possibly be linked to a significant increase in confidence later in the project reflected in other areas of the scale (see below) and also documented in leader, practitioner and parent observations. The pace of change of Child A appears more steady. Three other children (Child B, C and D) also achieved Level 5 for all indicators at the end, but the degree of change was less marked as they were already achieving Level 4 at the start of the project. However their progression to Level 5 by the middle of the project shows a fairly quick pace of change and development. It is interesting to note that two of these children were significantly older than some of the other children (see Appendix 2). Unfortunately there are gaps in the data for Child F but the graph does show an increase in score against two indicators. There is also suggestion of progression and development against other indicators in some of the other areas of project documentation.

### ***Observations and video footage of tracked children***

#### *Clifton Child A*

Practitioners noted that at the start of the project Child A was reluctant to participate in singing and other activities and stayed close to his mother. However, watched other children and appeared to enjoy and listen attentively to their singing. This trend continued until Session 5 when the practitioner noted: ***Child A sang the Hello Song (for the first time) but still stayed very close to his mother.*** The practitioner also indicated that Child A was also able to sing the song in time, from memory (he had absorbed the song in the earlier sessions) and with intent. It seems likely that these quite sudden developments in singing were linked to a parallel increase in confidence and participation also observed by the practitioner. Although he unfortunately missed a number of sessions after this point, during the final session Child A was observed singing in tune and making good progress towards all of the other singing indicators.

#### *Clifton Child B*

Child B was observed making good progress towards all singing indicators from the start of the project. In Session 1 it was noted she could sing in time and play an instrument simultaneously.

Involvement in and enthusiasm for singing appeared to continue as the project progressed and this is consistently evident in practitioner observations and also video footage. In Session 6 Child B was observed **tapping both hands in perfect time and swaying side to side whilst singing from memory**. Towards the end of the project video footage shows her skills continuing to develop when she was recorded simultaneously singing in time, in tune, with actions, waving rhythmically and then gradually slowing down in time with the Project Leader. Practitioners also regularly commented about increased rhythmic use of her body when singing. By the end of the project it was noted she had fully achieved all of the indicators.

#### *Greenfields Child C*

The CDRS suggests Child C was already making significant progress towards the singing indicators at the start of the project. However this was not immediately apparent in early observations and although engaged and interested, her active participation in singing and other activities appears to have been patchy. By session 5 however, Child C was joining in singing activity more frequently and in session 8, she was observed singing in time and rhythmically rocking and clapping to the song. During Session 10 the evaluator observed the child *singing in tune and with intent*. In the final session she was participating in all of the singing activities and observations indicate she had progressed further and was achieving well against all of the indicators. A practitioner observed: **she sings along all the time now and has a very lovely voice**.

#### *Greenfields Child D*

Practitioners and leaders both noted that the singing skills of Child D were already well developed at the start of the project and in Session 1 she was seen enthusiastically joining in all of the songs and demonstrating good progress towards all of the indicators. Observations of subsequent sessions indicate that she quickly learnt all of the songs and was able to sing them confidently in time, in tune, with actions and instruments and with a sense of purpose. In session 7 a practitioner observed: **She sings along to the Hello Song and says all the children's names. She sings with confidence and knows all of the words**. At the end of the project Child D's mother drew attention to how she had become more vocally expressive at home as a result of the project and also how she had started to make up her own songs and was also able to better sing in tune and time.

#### *Hyson Green Child E*

Observations of Child E indicate that she was initially quite reticent and lacking confidence but clearly interested in the activities. Further observations in the first few sessions suggest that as her level of confidence, participation and language increased so did her involvement in singing. By Session 5 the practitioner recorded that she was making progress towards all of the indicators and in particular noted: **I think this is the first time I have seen her happy and moving with the rhythm of the Hello Song and that I have been able to hear her voice. She also played a very slow beautiful tune on her instrument with Mat when she was singing**. In Session 8 she was observed **singing and knew the actions straight away** and by the end of the project it was noted that she was achieving well against all of the indicators. In addition, her mother was delighted that she remembered all of the songs and was spontaneously singing them at home nearly every day.

#### *Hyson Green Child F*

Although there is less documentation for Child F, observations clearly indicate some progress against some of the singing indicators. This was more evident in latter sessions when her participation, confidence and language acquisition appeared to increase. Practitioners

indicated that she sang very little in the earlier sessions but at the final visit she was clearly heard singing in tune and in time by the evaluator and also adding actions and moving rhythmically. In addition around the same time she was observed in another group session ***spontaneously singing and following along during messy play.***

### ***Summary of findings in relation to outcome***

The analysis of the CDRS, observations and video footage of the tracked children clearly suggest that individually and collectively they made progress against the singing indicators and increased their singing skills and during the project. Whilst the pace and degree of change was variable, this is to be expected given the different ages, developmental stages and experiences of the children. The two older children commenced the project with already well developed singing skills and therefore the change was less marked but still evident. Some of the most marked changes involved younger and EAL (English as an Additional Language) children where the CDRS also indicates that they had lower confidence and participation levels at the start of the project (see section below). The more pronounced level of change in their singing skills appears to correspond with a similar change in these other areas of development. A practitioner also felt that singing had supported the language development of these children and noted : ***Children who might not speak will sing – singing really helps with their language development.***

Observations and video footage also show similar patterns of change in other children. There are video clips and observations from all settings during the later stages of the project demonstrating children singing songs more purposefully, from memory, in time, in tune, with actions and with instruments. This was not the case with every child and a small number remained reluctant to actively participate in singing activities. However some of these more reticent children attentively listened to and watched other children and adults singing and joined in the linked actions and activities. It was also reported by their parents that some were actually singing project songs at home both in time and in tune by their parents.

There is clear evidence therefore of a significant increase in the overall singing skills of many of the children taking part indicating that this aspect of the musical skills outcome was achieved. In view of the previous limited singing experience of some of the children, it also seems highly likely that there was a direct link between the improvement in their skills and the experiences provided by the project.

### **2.2.2 Increased musical skills (playing and using instruments)**

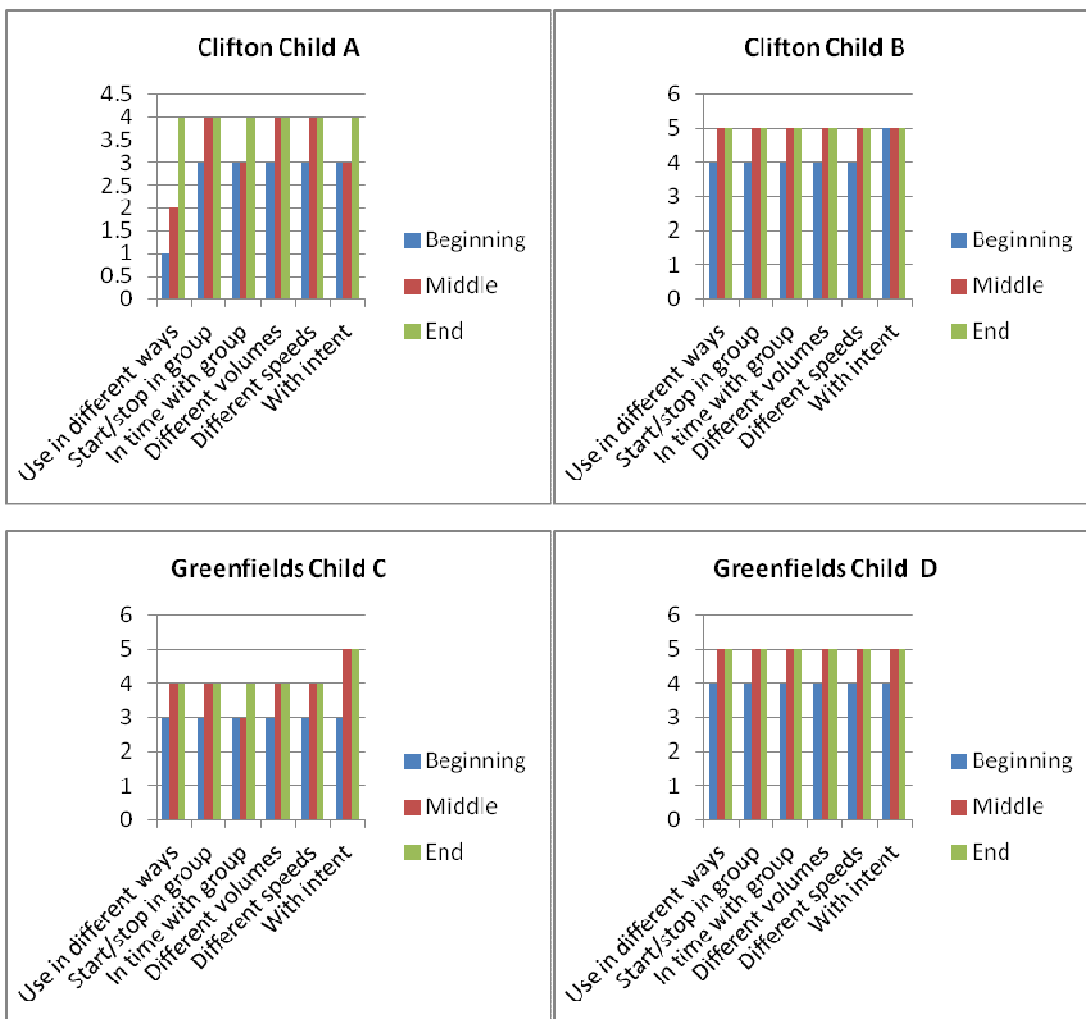
Although all settings used instruments regularly, they welcomed the opportunity to extend their experience of how to work with them in a more purposeful and integrated way to support children's musical and other learning. As with singing, some children had limited experience of focused instrument work. During the project through both guided and free play activity, they were able to explore and use an attractive and interesting range of instruments varying in size (including some very large), materials (e.g. use of wood and natural materials such as gourds, bright colours) and type (e.g. tuned, untuned, shaken, beaten etc). The guided aspects included supporting children to use and manipulate their instruments correctly and activities to learn about pulse, rhythm, pace (fast and slow), dynamics (loud and quiet), different sounds, improvisation (through call and response and one to one interactions), ensemble skills (stopping and starting, following a lead, taking turns etc). These were often incorporated into other aspects of the project including singing and story telling. The free play activities provided opportunities for children to freely access and explore instruments carefully set out in an engaging way within sessions. Adults (including parents in some sessions) were encouraged to interact with and respond to their lead where appropriate.

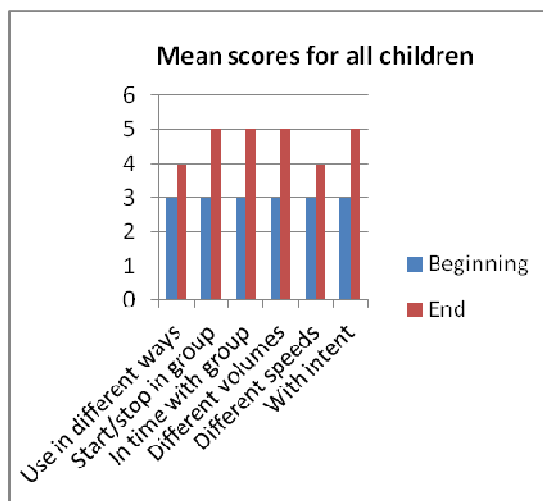
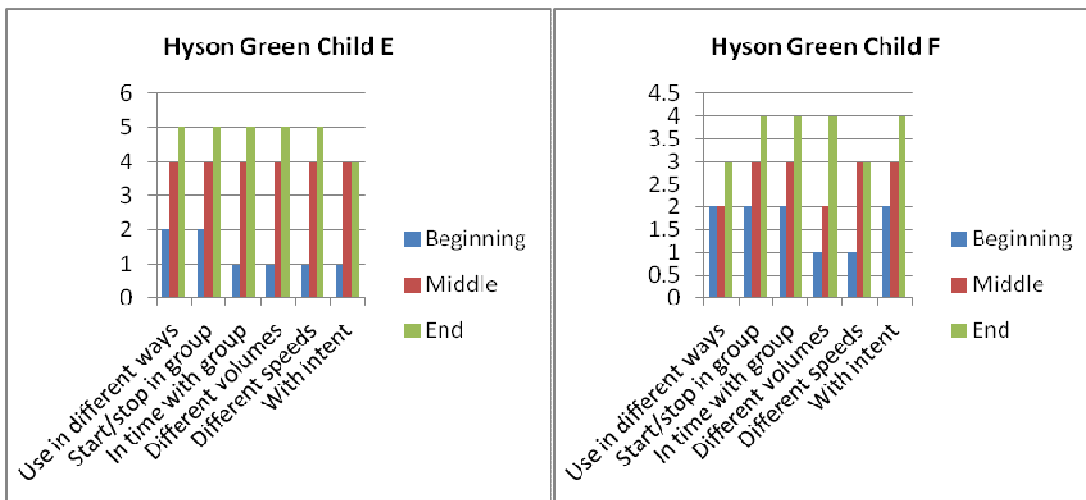
## Analysis of CDRS scores

The graphs below give an indication of how the musical skills of the tracked children progressed during the project. Again, each child was scored at the three key points in the project against the following indicators:

- Can manipulate and use a range of instruments in different ways
- Can start and stop with a group
- Can play in time with a group
- Can play at different volumes (loud and soft) and understands the difference
- Can play at different speeds (slow and fast) and understands the difference
- Plays with intent (effortful, engaged, confident playing)

The final graph presents the mean scores against each indicator at the beginning and end of the project to show the overall rate of change.





The graphs show all children individually improving their scores for each indicator by the end of the project. The mean scores also show significant overall improvement but with a more marked degree of change (from Level 3 to Level 5) for three of the indicators (start/stop, playing in time and playing with intent). The pattern of individual change again suggests a link with the different ages and experiences of the children. As with singing skills, two children (Child B and D) were already achieving at least Level 4 at the start of the project for all indicators, progressed to Level 5 (fully achieving the indicator) by the middle and maintained this level at the end. Child E also achieved Level 5 in all indicators but one (playing with intent) by the end but the overall degree of change here was more marked as she progressed from either Level 1 or Level 2 to Level 4 across all indicators by the middle and then progressed further to Level 5 for all but one indicator by the end. The three other children (Child A, C and F) achieved Level 4 for most indicators by the end of the project. The overall degree of change was less marked for Child A and Child C who progressed from a Level 3 for most indicators at the start. Both children achieved this progression by the middle for at least half of the indicators. The pace and degree of change across the project for Child F was more steady and greater overall.

**Observations and video footage of tracked children**

*Clifton Child A*

Although Child A did not participate independently, practitioner observations suggest from the outset he started to make steady progress each week. For example, in Session 2 with support



from his mother, he was able to use different instruments (shake bells, tap a tambourine and a drum), stop and start with the group and play at and understand different volumes. In session 4 he was slightly more independent and observed playing in time and correctly playing different speeds in response to a beater going up and down. In Session 5 he was observed independently choosing and playing instruments in a more purposeful and focused way. In this session the practitioner noted: **His rhythm was exactly the same as Mat and he wasn't shy about making a sound. He was also able to demonstrate stopping and starting, making loud and quieter sounds and when to listen or play his instrument.** Despite missing some sessions, by the end of the project the practitioner felt he was achieving well against all of the indicators and noted he was **playing his tambourine with a passion, understanding loud and quiet, slow and fast and waiting his turn to play in the group.**

#### *Clifton Child B*

As with singing, early observations indicate that Child B already had well developed musical skills at the start of the project. For example in Session 2 a practitioner noted: **she plays the cabassa, shakes on the beat and sings as well.** Her father also indicated that prior to the project she liked music and was always singing and dancing at home and playing constantly on his snare drum. In Session 3 she was observed demonstrating how to play a tambourine to other children and then subsequently trying out different ways of playing the tambourine (e.g. banging, tapping, shaking) in time whilst singing a song. By the middle of the project observations and video footage suggest she had fully achieved all of the indicators. Video footage of Session 5 shows her initiating a confident musical dialogue with the Project Leader in which she purposefully played a series of separate rhythmic ascending and descending arpeggios, waited for the Project Leader to copy her between each arpeggio and then continued the dialogue in perfect time until breaking into a series of freer repeated notes. Other similar examples later in the project demonstrate increasingly sophisticated musical and expressive skills and greater confidence when using instruments.

#### *Greenfields Child C*

The CDRS suggests that Child C was making some progress towards the instrument indicators at the start of the project but as with singing, this was not noticeable in the observations during the early stage which were not particularly detailed. However in Sessions 5 and 6 there is evidence of increased participation in instrument work, playing her instrument quite confidently and understanding and following start/stop and loud/soft signals. A leader noted she was **able to get the grasp of stopping in time and only playing one beat.** Video footage of Session 7 shows her participating in a call and response activity with the Project Leader and playing a small glockenspiel carefully and purposefully. In later sessions practitioners noted that she had made good progress towards all of the indicators and was particularly able to keep a steady beat.

#### *Greenfields Child D*

Despite a lack of detailed observations focusing on Child D's interactions with instruments in the first few sessions, it is evident from more general comments that she was already confident in using and manipulating instruments and had probably made good progress towards the other indicators. Subsequently observations during Session 3 indicated that she was quickly able to understand and play at different volumes and take the lead in this activity with other children. She also demonstrated being able to play and maintain a steady beat with a group of other children in Session 4 and in later sessions was able to sustain a steady beat on an instrument whilst singing and also whilst the Project Leader was improvising over the top. She was observed engaging in call and response activities, confidently leading stop and start signals followed by other children. In a later session she demonstrated clear understanding about the relationship

between instrumental sounds and the materials they are made from when she was heard saying **Gourds make it loud like that**. Towards the end of the project practitioner observations indicated that she had achieved all of the indicators fully.

#### *Hyson Green Child E*

Although lacking in confidence and experience initially, observations indicate that Child E began to participate in instrument work from the outset and to quite quickly make good progress against the indicators and to achieved most of them by the end of the project. In the second session she was observed playing her chosen instrument quite confidently with the other children and able to respond correctly to stop and start and loud and soft signals. In later sessions she was observed purposefully selecting instruments, demonstrating a good sense of pulse and keeping in time with music played by the Project Leader, following and understanding slow/fast and high/low signals and playing with intent during call and response activity. In the final session the evaluator made the following observation: **Mat said 'Lets listen to Child E'. She plays a quiet repeated phrase and became gradually louder progressing from one end of the chime bar to the other. Then she says 'shush' and plays very quietly and purposefully with intent and 'leads' Mat who 'follows' her lead**. This sophisticated response indicates significant progression and an ability to initiate her own musical responses and to use different dynamics in a controlled and purposeful way.

#### *Hyson Green Child F*

Observations indicate Child F made steady progress against most indicators throughout the project. In the second session she, along with other children she was observed following stop/start and loud/soft signals. In Session 4 she was able to keep a beat during a song and participate independently in a call and response activity. Subsequently she was observed independently choosing and using instruments in a controlled way and exploring different ways of using them. A practitioner also noted **Child F is enjoying playing percussion instruments now. She is also dancing with her body as the leader plays the guitar and sings. She is experimenting with different sounds and trying to distinguish between playing quietly and loudly**. During the final session it was evident that she had made significant progression against the indicators and was seen confidently choosing an instrument, following leaders playing different volumes, correctly playing a beat in turn a group, improvising purposefully and initiating call and responses activities. The evaluator noted: **Child F looks at Mat and plays a single beat on the tambour and then lengthens the phrase. She looks at Mat again. She uses both beaters with purpose and confidence. This then turns into hide and seek behind the tambour and Child F peeps out**.

#### **Summary of findings in relation to outcome**

The CDRS analysis, observations and video footage suggest that overall, the tracked children made progress against the instrument indicators and increased their skills in playing and using instruments. Again the variable level and speed of change reflects the range of children involved with the two oldest children fully achieving all indicators by the middle of the project. However in comparison to the singing indicators it is also interesting and encouraging to note the quicker and marked change of Child E and Child F, both of whom were EAL and had little previous experience of using instruments at the start of the project. This seems to link with a comment made by the Project Leader who felt that instrument activity worked particularly well with these children because it did not involve any use of language at all. Instead, the children learnt directly through non verbal communication and modelling.

The observations and video footage also provided evidence of many other children responding well to the instrument work and developing their skills in this respect. There are some

particularly good video clips and detailed observations of sessions at Clifton which show individual children clearly progressing and developing over an 8 week period. There are examples of children exploring and playing instruments in different ways, developing and improving their time keeping skills during songs and instrument work, becoming more confident and purposeful in call and response activities and sometimes leading/initiating this and becoming more adept at responding to and understanding start/stop, volume and speed signals. There are more similar examples at the other settings although not over such an extended period of time. Practitioners and leaders drew particular attention to a child at Clifton who at the start of the project lacked confidence and had difficulty in expressing himself. It is evident from both observations and video footage that he quickly became very engaged in the instrument work and made significant progress towards all of the indicators by the end of the project. He participated particularly well in the improvised and call and response activities and there are a number of video clips showing him in 'dialogue' with the Project Leader, listening carefully to the Project Leader's 'call' and producing some confident, sophisticated and purposeful responses. This particular aspect of the instrument work seemed to provide this child with a fulfilling means of expressing himself and as a result of his responses his parents decided to buy him a xylophone to continue improvising and playing at home. Another child at Greenfields started the project with little experience of using instruments and unsure of how to use and respond to them. By the end, she was confidently choosing and playing them, making and exploring differences in sounds, keeping in time, understanding and using dynamics and speed and initiating call and response dialogues.

The above findings again clearly suggest an overall increase in the instrument skills of all tracked and many other children, thereby indicating achievement of this aspect of the musical skills outcome. As with singing, the previous limited experience of most children in this aspect of music making suggests a correlation between the increase in skills and the project activities.

### **2.2.3 Music technology**

Initially there were two outcomes relating to music technology as follows:

- Increasing the facility amongst the children to use the music technology software creatively;
- developing a language and understanding amongst the children and practitioners around the analysis and manipulation of sound.

However, without the planned new software (which was designed to be operated by children), it was not really possible to provide the full range of music technology opportunities originally intended as children were not able to use the alternative software independently as planned. Therefore the first outcome and some linked indicators became less relevant and the music technology work focused more on the second outcome and related indicators. As a consequence, the less relevant indicators have been omitted from the graphs and analysis below. Although the outcome in this section refers to both children and practitioners, the analysis below only focuses on children and its application to practitioners is considered in other sections.

None of the children had previous experience of music technology and the project provided them with an unusual opportunity to explore and learn about different sounds. The process involved them initially selecting or creating their own sounds which were often linked with other areas of the project including story telling and singing. The children were encouraged to either use their own voices, instruments or sounds made by materials and items in the session environment. With support from the Project Leader, they then recorded their sound into sound recording software using a hand held microphone connected to a computer. After processing by the Project Leader, the sound was played back and the children made choices about how these could be further manipulated and transformed. After further processing, the children

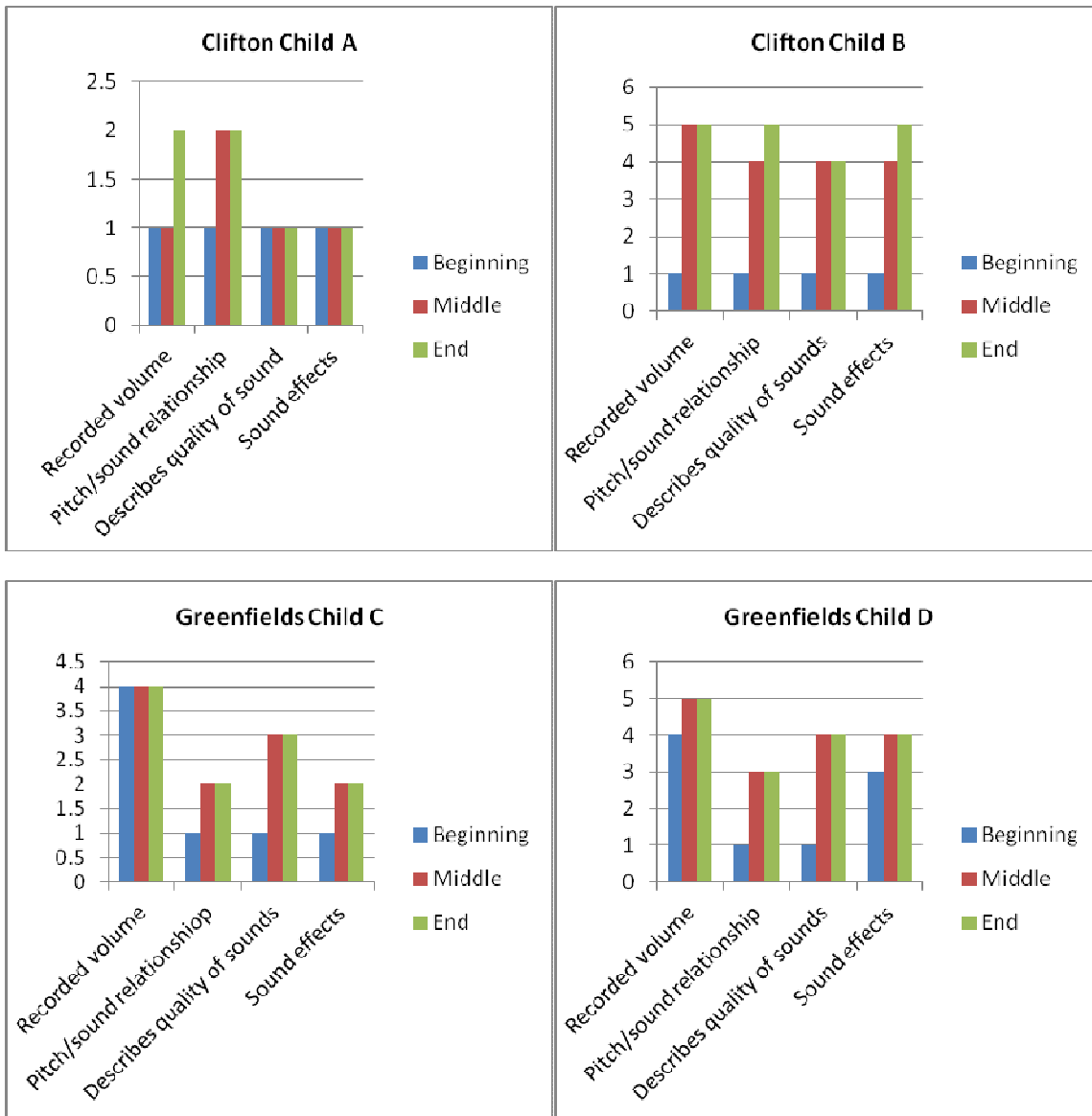
were then able to explore the sounds on a keyboard. Had the new software been available, this would have enabled children to participate in a similar process but with much less involvement of the Project Leader.

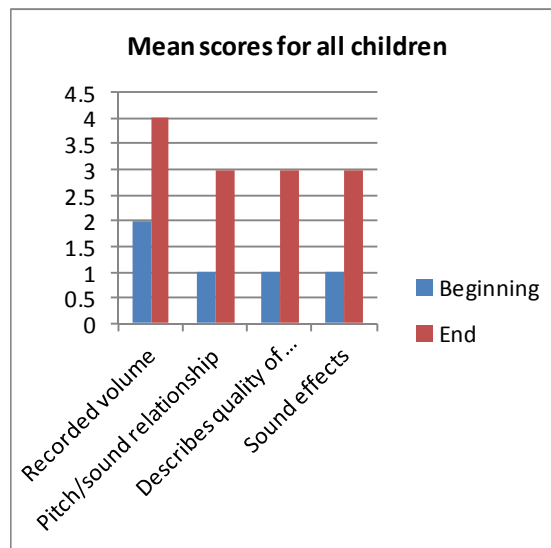
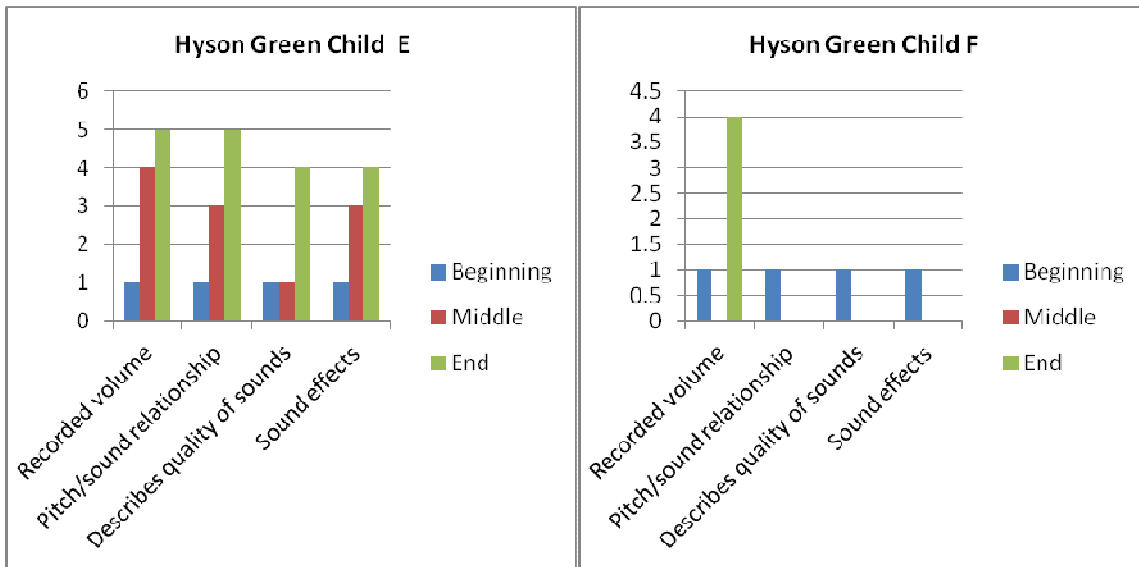
**Analysis of CDRS scores**

The graphs below show the tracked children’s scores at the three key points in the project against the following music technology indicators:

- Shows perception of the recorded volume of a sound
- Recognises the relationship between pitch on the keyboard and the change in the sampled sound
- Can describe the quality of a sampled and edited sound
- Demonstrates an understanding of what effects do to a sound

The final graph presents the mean scores for all children at the beginning and end of the project to show the overall rate of change.





The mean scores all show significant overall improvement against the music technology indicators. However graphs for individual children show a slightly different pattern. As this was a new experience, not unexpectedly most children commenced the project scoring Level 1 against most indicators. Three children (Child B, Child D and Child E) were achieving either Level 5 or Level 4 for nearly all indicators by the end of the project therefore representing a marked increase in their language and understanding around the process of recording and manipulating sounds. The pace of change for Child B and Child D was particularly quick with both achieving at least Level 4 for most indicators by the middle of the project and Level 5 in some cases. The pattern of change for Child E was more steady although the graph shows a more marked development towards the end for one indicator (describing the quality of a sound) which may reflect a parallel increase in confidence and acquisition of language. Child C shows some progress against three indicators scoring either Level 2 or 3 and maintaining Level 4 for another. Child A only made a small degree of progress towards two indicators and which again perhaps links with low confidence and participation levels during the earlier sessions but is

probably more likely attributable to his absence from a number sessions. It is unfortunate that there are major gaps in data for Child F with only one indicator (recognises when a recorded sound is too loud) scored beyond the beginning of the project. However, observations and some video footage do provide evidence of her progress against the other indicators (see below).

### **Observations and video footage of tracked children**

#### *Clifton Child A*

It was noted that Child A did not actively participate in the music technology work until about Session 5. In this session, he was observed for the first time making and recording a non verbal sound and independently holding the microphone. He also explored the keyboard and seemed aware of the relationship between the sounds and the keyboard. The practitioner noted that he was **amazed with the sounds the keyboard was making** and continued playing and exploring the keyboard for some time. In the final session (after missing a number) he remained enthusiastic about the music technology work and became animated when playing his recorded sound back on the keyboard. By the end of the project observations indicate that Child A had made some progress towards two indicators (recognising when a recorded sound is too loud and the keyboard/changing sound relationship). However, probably linked to his ongoing reluctance to speak in the group, there is little evidence of significant progress towards the other two indicators (describing sampled sound quality and describing/understanding sound effects).

#### *Clifton Child B*

There is not much detailed observation of Child B's responses to the music technology activities in earlier sessions although it is evident that she was participating but with variable levels of engagement. By the mid point, both practitioner and leader observations show that she had become much more interested and had made good progress towards some of the indicators. Subsequently in Session 7 a practitioner noted: **Child B chose a tambourine and beater to make her sound. She hit the beater against the tambourine whilst Mat held the microphone and recorded her sound. She said 'we can play it on the piano now'. 'Yes we can' said Mat. J used her first finger and ran it along the keyboard to hear her sound. She then used her hand flat against the keyboard and ran her fingers very quickly along the keyboard saying 'It's faster now'**. This suggests that she understood the relationship between the keyboard pitch and change in sampled sound and was also able to describe the quality of the sounds. In another session she was concerned that another child might be scared by a recorded sound because and said it was **very loud**. Observations and video footage towards the end of the project indicate she had made good progress towards all of the indicators, understood the basic process (recording, sampling and playing), could make purposeful choices about what effects to use (eg an echo), understood how to use the keyboard to make high/low, loud/soft and fast/slow sounds and was able to relate sounds made to a story.

#### *Greenfields Child C*

Observations suggest that Child C participated in the music technology activities from the outset and seemed more confident and able to communicate verbally when doing this than in some of the other activities. By the middle of the project there is evidence that she was beginning to understand the process and making progress towards all indicators. Towards the end of the project, a practitioner noted the following response when Child C was listening to and watching another child at the keyboard: **J's sounds are played. Child C says 'That's funny, press the bottom, press the bottom J, its noisy. Try this one'. Child C points to the bottom of the keyboard. She then reaches over and says 'Try this one', pointing to the top.** This shows quite

sophisticated understanding of the relationship between keyboard pitch (two extremes of high and low) and the change in sampled sound (the 'noisy' low sound). It also demonstrates aspects of peer learning. In making suggestions to the other child, Child C was also showing an ability to describe the quality of sounds and an understanding of what effects do to a sound. It seems from these observations that Child C had perhaps made more progress towards some indicators by the end of the project than the CDRS would suggest.

#### *Greenfields Child D*

It seems that Child D quickly engaged with the music technology aspect and began to show some quite sophisticated and confident responses fairly early on. In Session 4, both practitioners and leaders reported that Child D was able to identify when there was a 'delay' on a sampled sound and that she also recognised that it was not possible to hear this when everyone was playing at the same time. Towards the end of the project it was clear that she had made significant progress towards all indicators. This is particularly evident in the following observation of a small group activity: ***R is letting Child D join him in making a sound on the keyboard. Child D says 'It sounds like someone is having a bath. Where is the echo?' 'I was waiting for someone to ask that' says Mat. Child D then points to the key that is used as the base pitch for all the sounds (middle C) and asks 'Is that my normal sound' and then she explore the keyboard. 'Echo' she shouts again – lower down the keyboard. She loves the echo sound and plays different notes carefully listening to each echo with intent. 'Which sound do you prefer?' Mat ask and Child D indicates her favourite 'normal' sound. She hands the microphone back to Mat and says 'I actually like all of them and presses down as many keys as possible. That's a lot of*** ***Child Ds says Mat!*** This shows a quite sophisticated level of understanding of the process including an ability to recognise the relationship between the pitch on the keyboard and the change in the sampled sound. Child D also knew and understood the position and significance of middle C as the 'base' note for all of the recorded sounds – ie her 'normal' sound. Furthermore she was able to clearly communicate what sound effect she wanted, to use the correct vocabulary and to describe the quality of a sound.

#### *Hyson Green Child E*

As there are not many observations of Child E during music technology work, it is not really possible to determine whether the marked degree of development shown in the CDRS was achieved in reality. However the practitioner noted that from Session 4 she began to participate with much more confidence and enthusiasm. Attention was also drawn to how she often repeatedly used the middle C key of the keyboard (the only key where the voice sounded 'normal') and indicated that she preferred this sound to the other changed sounds (showing an understanding of the relationship between the keyboard and sampled sound). Later in the project she was observed playing her sounds on the keyboard in a 'careful' way and purposefully listening to the effects. These responses indicate an understanding of the process and progress towards some indicators, although contrary to the CDRS score, there is not really evidence of progression towards the indicator concerned with describing sounds.

#### *Hyson Green Child F*

Observations indicate that although initially quite reticent, Child F surprisingly made a sound into the microphone during the first session. In subsequent sessions, although she did not always make her own sound, she intently watched and listened to other children make sounds and became quite confident in exploring these herself on the keyboard. By the middle of the project she was participating more actively and showing increasing understanding of the process, particularly sound effects. For example in Session 6 the leader noted that she demonstrated ***active listening as the delay in the sound was allowed to decay before triggering a new sound.*** At the end of the project both leaders and practitioners indicated that, out of

the all the participating children, Child F played and listened to the sampled sounds on the keyboard particularly carefully. Overall the observations suggest that Child F understood the process well and made significant progression towards at least three of the indicators. However as with Child E, it was difficult to identify any progression with regard to describing the quality of a sampled sound.

### ***Summary of findings in relation to outcome***

The above findings suggest that all tracked children, to varying degrees, increased their understanding and experience of the process of recording, manipulating and exploring different sounds. Alongside this it also seems that most were starting to understand and in some cases actively use new language and vocabulary linked to the process of sound manipulation. Not unexpectedly children who made less progress with regard to the latter tended to be younger children or those lacking in confidence, reluctant /unable to speak or EAL children. However not actively using language does not necessarily seem to indicate a lack of understanding and one or two of these children, despite being relatively young, demonstrated quite significant progress towards those indicators concerned with understanding (eg the relationship between keyboard and sampled sound and understanding what sound effects can do to a sound).

Observations and video footage demonstrate similar patterns of development amongst many of the other children. By the middle of the project at one setting for example, leaders noted how all of the children confidently ***brought instruments to the computer to record, were aware of the different sounds coming out of the computer after the recording and chose either an echo or a cave effect to add to their sound.*** Video footage around the same time also shows a previously reticent child wholly absorbed and confidently pouring water to make a sound, experimenting afterwards with the recorded sound (initially ascending and descending patterns then slow purposeful single keys), choosing an echo effect and listening carefully to the result when he tried it out on the keyboard. Parents reported that since participating in the project, another child had started to search out and play music on the computer at home and also to experiment with ring tones and music on a mobile phone. Finally the Project Leader drew attention to how one child clearly understood what type of sound effect she wanted to make and the relationship between the pitch on the keyboard and the sound she wanted to hear. In addition she also knew where middle C was on the keyboard and understood that this was 'her' sound. There are more similar documented responses of children at all settings which indicate overall increasing engagement with and understanding of music technology work and significant progress towards the indicators.

Overall there is clear evidence to suggest that the revised music technology outcome was achieved with most children able to develop and increase their understanding around the analysis and manipulation of sound and in some cases beginning to develop a corresponding language. The first time experience of all children in this aspect of music technology again suggests a clear link between their progression and experiences provided during the project.

### **2.2.4 Increased use and acquisition of language, particularly through storytelling**

Alongside the musical and music technology aspects of the project, story telling and story making was used as a means of inspiring children and enabling them to place the sounds they were exploring and creating during the other activities within a meaningful context. As already evident, embedded into these activities were many opportunities to support and extend children's language and communication skills in areas such as speaking, listening, understanding, self expression and also to acquire and use new language and vocabulary.



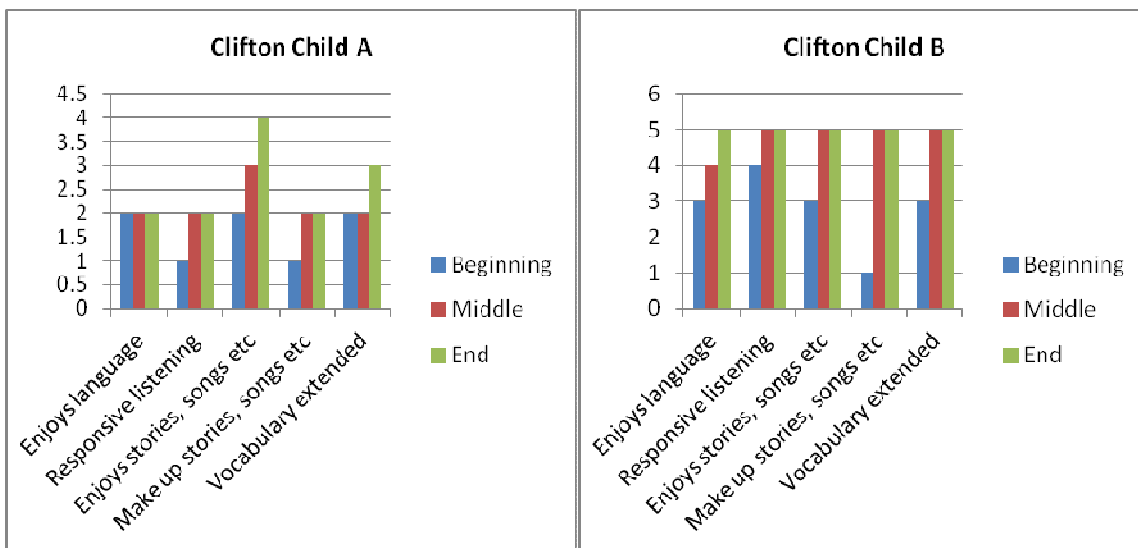
The use of stories within this coherent process varied from setting to setting and in response to the prevailing developmental stages and level of language of the children. In Hyson Green for example, because of the limited English language of the children, it quickly became clear that story creation was not so appropriate and that the children would benefit more from the telling of more simple traditional stories supported with visual aids (eg puppets) and sounds and repeated from week to week. In the other settings, particularly Clifton there was more scope for story creation and this was sometimes responsive to ideas initiated by the children and with the sounds created during music technology work place within the narrative. In addition, a range of other stories were told including some traditional and some more contemporary and again these included opportunities for children to respond with sounds and also comments and actions.

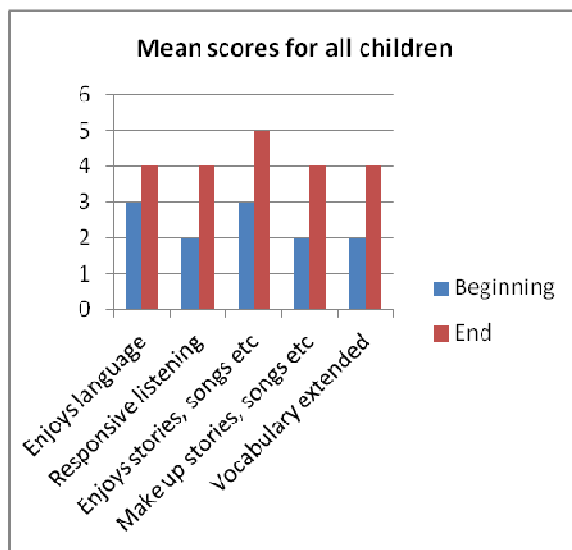
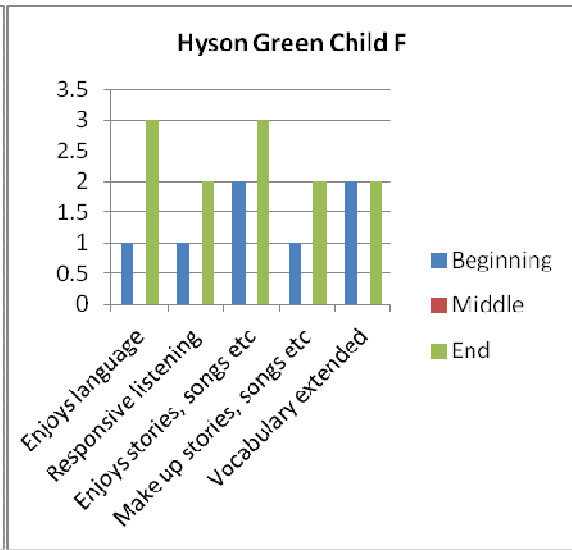
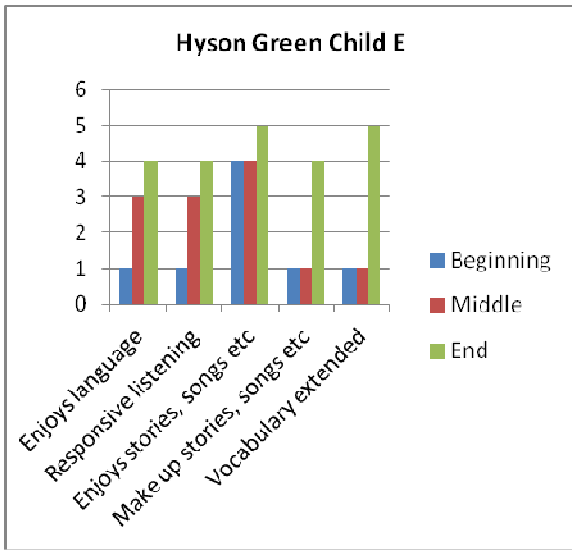
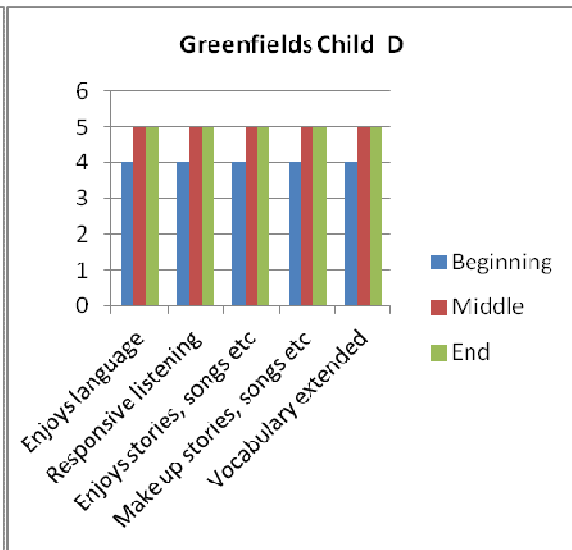
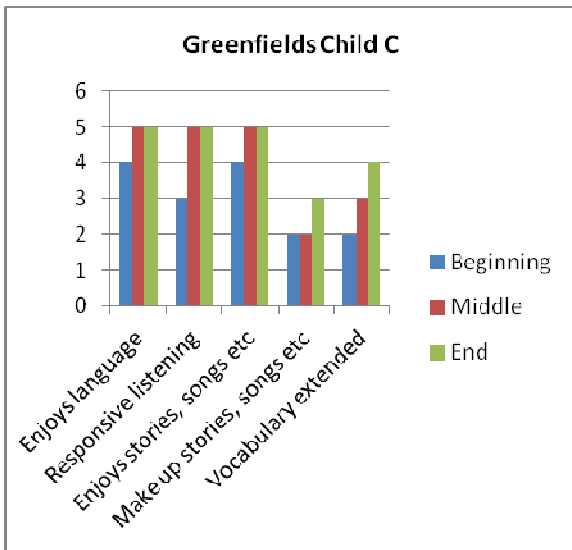
**Analysis of CDRS scores**

The graphs show the tracked children’s scores at the three key points in the project for the following indicators:

- Enjoys listening to and using spoken/written language
- Can sustain attentive listening and responds to what has heard with comments, questions or actions
- Listens with enjoyment and responds to stories, rhymes, songs and music
- Makes up own stories, rhymes and songs
- Vocabulary extended and using new words and sounds

The final graph presents the mean scores for all children at the beginning and end of the project to show the overall rate of change.





Although there are varying degrees of change, the mean scores indicate significant improvement against all indicators by the end of the project with the highest scoring area being enjoyment of stories/songs etc. Individual children's scores again appear to reflect the diversity of the group and show four children significantly improving their scores against all indicators by the end of the project and two making progress against most indicators which suggests an overall increase in the specified aspects of language and communication during the period of the project. Whilst more rigorous research would be needed to link this change directly with story telling and other project activities, the scores are encouraging nevertheless, particularly for those children with limited English language. Child E for example was at Level 1 for most indicators at the start of the project and progressed to Level 4 for three indicators (enjoys language, responsive listening and enjoys) and Level 5 for another (stories, songs etc) by the end which represents quite a marked degree of change. Although starting from a slightly higher level for most indicators (mainly Level 3), possibly reflecting her older age, Child B (EAL) also demonstrates a significant increase, achieving Level 5 for four indicators by the end of the project and for all by the end. Child C (EAL) also appears to have progressed quickly to Level 5 for three indicators focusing on listening and enjoyment of language/stories by the middle and made significant progress in another (extended vocabulary extended) by the end. There is some, but slightly less change for Child F (EAL) by the end of the project which may have been a reflection of her comparatively young age. There is also less marked change for Child D (non EAL) who commenced the project achieving well against all indicators (Level 4). However she quickly progressed to Level 5 by the middle which again seems to correspond with her more advanced age and experience. Child A (non EAL) only made a small amount of progress against four indicators which probably reflects both his limited attendance and participation. However there is an encouraging change against one indicator (enjoyment of stories etc) which achieved a Level 4 by the end of the project.

### **Observations and video footage**

#### *Clifton Child A*

Even though initially Child A's language was quite limited and he reluctant to speak within the group, there is evidence of some progress during the first half of the project. For example, in Session 2 the practitioner observed that he listened attentively during two songs and described very simply (in one word answers) what he 'found' during an interactive song. By the middle of the project, in tandem with a noticeable increase in confidence and more independent participation, more attentive and responsive listening was noted and increased enjoyment during singing and story time. Even though Child A did not attend any more sessions until the end of the project, he seems to have maintained this level of confidence and was observed as follows during the final session: **Child A didn't look over at his mother. He was asked what he found when he was digging and clearly replied 'snake'. I then observed Child A leave his space and crawl and sliver around the floor just like a snake.** Here he was clearly responding with more confident words and actions. However there were no observations indicating he was making up songs/stories or extended vocabulary as suggested in the CDRS scores at the end of the project.

#### *Clifton Child B*

Although Child B (an EAL child) had limited English language at the start of the project, subsequent observations and parent feedback indicate that she quickly increased her knowledge of and confidence in this respect. By the end of the project it was clear that she had fully achieved all of the indicators and that her language acquisition had increased, as a result of not only the stories but also the songs and music technology work. A practitioner noted: **her language has come on from the first week. She now knows and uses many words in English. She uses lots of language at the keyboard (eg I'll hold the microphone) and is very descriptive**

**during the stories and songs and tells you all about them. This has developed through the project. She has become more talkative as the weeks have passed. Her confidence has also grown in talking to adults – this was not the case initially and she now tells Mat what she wants to sing and which stories she wants to listen to. All of this has evolved through the project.** There are many other observed and videoed examples of these developments across the project. In addition, Child A's father also reported: **This group has helped her with language acquisition. She has learnt more words and benefited from being in a smaller group in this way.**

#### *Greenfields Child C*

Observations suggest that Child C (an EAL child) made progress towards most of the indicators by the end of the project and it was suggested this change was probably linked to an increase in confidence. As noted previously, she seemed more comfortable using language during the music technology activities and towards the middle of the project was heard using descriptive language and giving other children and the Project Leader suggestions and instructions about what sounds to make on the keyboard. In addition, practitioners also drew attention to her increasing enjoyment of stories and songs, some attentive and responsive listening (particularly during story time – eg describing a story as **scary** and making comments and responses) and her ability to understand and follow some quite complex verbal signals/instructions during instrument work.

#### *Greenfields Child D*

It is evident from observations that Child D was already achieving well against the indicators at the start of the project and had good understanding and acquisition of language. For example in Session 1 she was noted **asking lots of questions and speaking confidently**. However, practitioners indicated that they believed her language, vocabulary and knowledge definitely increased as a result of the project. This is already evident above with regard to music technology and also instrument work. In addition, a practitioner also noted that **she has learnt and now uses musical concepts and terminology** and also drew attention to her increasingly descriptive and responsive language when participating in activities and also when listening to stories. By the end of the project there are many observations which indicate that she had fully achieved the indicators and increased her knowledge, use and enjoyment of language, not only through story telling but through the music and music technology aspects.

#### *Hyson Green Child E*

Practitioners and leaders felt that the acquisition and use of English language of Child E increased significantly as a result of the experiences provided by the project. Observations indicate that she did not speak at all during the first few sessions, although her participation in activities increased and she listened attentively during songs and stories and was able to follow verbal instructions during instrument work. A break through was observed half way through when unexpectedly she said **I love you** to the Project Leader and following that she suddenly started to participate more independently and actively communicate verbally within the group, saying **hello** and **goodbye**, counting in the songs, making verbal contributions in the songs and responding to questions, although these were quite limited. At the end of Session 5, the practitioner noted: **This is a very good sudden change**. Also by the end of the project it was noted that she had learnt all of the project songs and was actively singing them with the group and also spontaneously at home. Her mother remarked at the end of the project that **Everyday she sings the songs from the sessions** and also that she remembered and talked about what she had done, for eg, **play drum** and **say hello**. Both practitioners and leaders felt that Child E's progress was more likely to be linked to the singing and music technology aspects than the story telling as she (and other children) found this aspect more challenging due to their limited language, particularly when the stories became more complex. Following a decision to return to a simpler and more familiar story and to aid understanding with use of sounds and visual aids,

observations indicated that Child E and the other children listened more attentively, responding with actions and repeated key words indicating improved understanding. By the end of the project practitioner observations provided evidence that she had made progress against nearly all of the indicators although there was no reference to her making up her own songs and stories etc.

#### *Hyson Green Child F*

As with Child E, observations indicate that Child F's use of language was limited at the beginning of the project but that this did develop during the project in parallel with an increase in participation and confidence. In the first session a practitioner noted she was **watchful but reluctant to respond to questions** and it appears from observations that she did not verbally communicate within the group until around half way through the project. However she was noted listening intently and with enjoyment during songs and stories (with regard to the latter, it was again felt that as the stories became more complex, they were of little benefit due to limited language). In Session 6 she was observed verbalising for the first time including imitating sounds, responding to questions with words and actions in the songs and speaking into the microphone during music technology work. By the end of the project she had learnt the songs and was observed singing them clearly and responding with actions. At the end of the project, Child F's parent felt that the project had increased her language and that she had learnt and used some new words (surprisingly this is not reflected in the corresponding CDRS indicator) and also that it had enabled her to express herself more and make herself more understood.

#### **Summary of findings in relation to outcome**

Both the CDRS and observations indicate that as a group, the tracked children made overall progress against all the target areas of language and communication by the end of the project and that most children individually made progress against them also. Whilst the pattern of change again reflects the diversity of the group, it is amongst the EAL children that there appears to have been the most marked development, although again factors such as age appear to be reflected. It is also interesting but not really surprising that those children with more limited language appeared to progress better against the indicators focusing on enjoyment and attentive and responsive listening rather than the areas concerned with active use of language (eg making up stories etc). This trend is also reflected in the mean scores which shows enjoyment of stories and songs as the highest scoring indicator overall. With regard to the two older children (both EAL and non EAL), whilst their project starting levels are slightly different, in comparison to the younger children, there is more evidence of increased acquisition, understanding and use of new words (particularly project specific vocabulary) and use of more sophisticated, descriptive language and responses particularly during story telling and singing, but also during music technology and instrument work.

Observations and video footage suggest similar patterns of language development amongst other participating children. There are further examples noted of those children with more well established language learning and using new project specific vocabulary and also starting to use more descriptive and extended language, particularly during stories (including pre-empting events and also completing stories), music technology and singing activities. Practitioners also remarked on the development of other EAL children and their increasing use of words and vocabulary they had encountered during stories and songs. In one setting, attention was also drawn to a child with very limited language and speech who had difficulty in expressing himself, even to his parents in his home environment. However, he appeared engaged from the outset, listened attentively during the activities and was particularly drawn to the music technology work which appeared to encourage him to say his first word 'Dedo' (hello) during the project. Although still limited and not always clear, observations indicate that his use of language and speech began to extend as the project progressed in tandem with a clear

increase in confidence. By the middle of the project he was starting to become more responsive to questions and make contributions (generally single words) during songs and stories and also observed using new words (eg cave and echo) during music technology work. Towards the end of the project in a story making session he was heard saying (***I want a story about an aeroplane in the snow*** – which is more extended language than before and indicates significant progression.

The above findings indicate an overall increase in the use and acquisition of the language of most children during the project and overall achievement of the outcome. Whilst more in depth research would be needed to attribute this change to the project, the findings are still encouraging and do appear to suggest a link with some aspects of the project including story telling. However, this did not take place in isolation from other activities and was particularly linked with the singing and music technology work and it seems therefore that all of these together provided a coherent framework that encouraged and enabled children to extend some aspects of their use and acquisition of language.

### **2.2.5 Improved social and psychological well being (by noting changes to listening skills, concentration, participation, co-operation and self-confidence)**

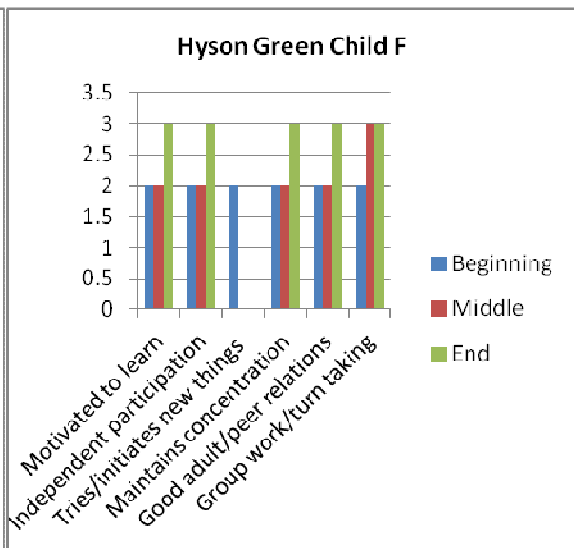
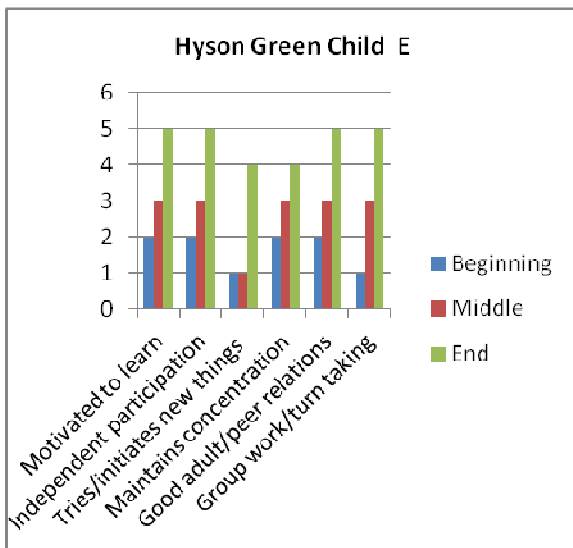
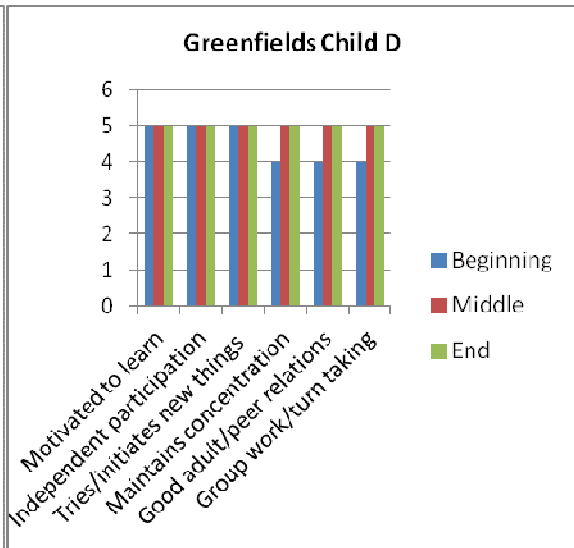
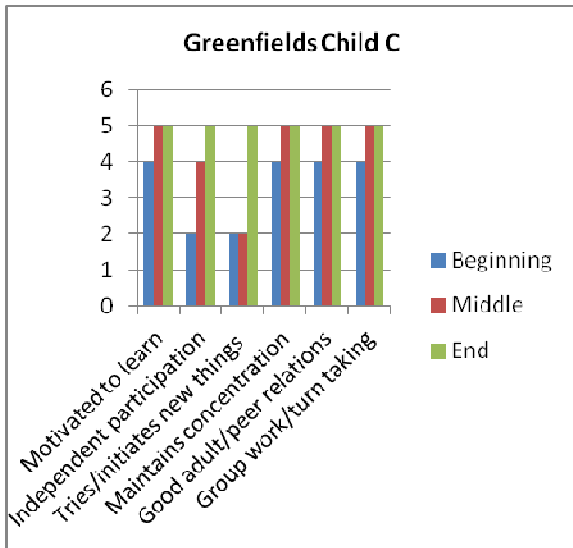
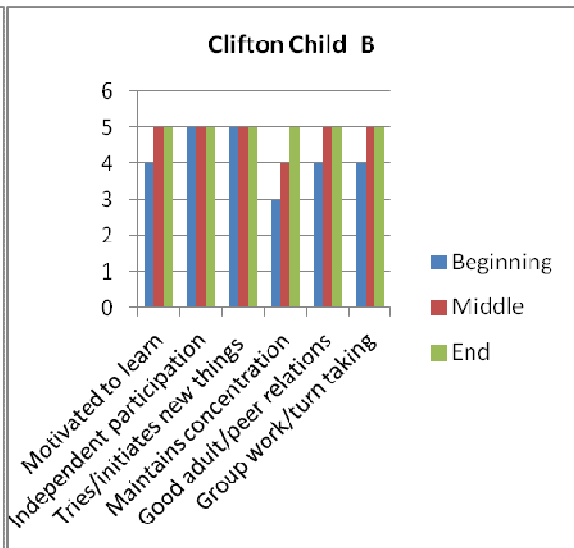
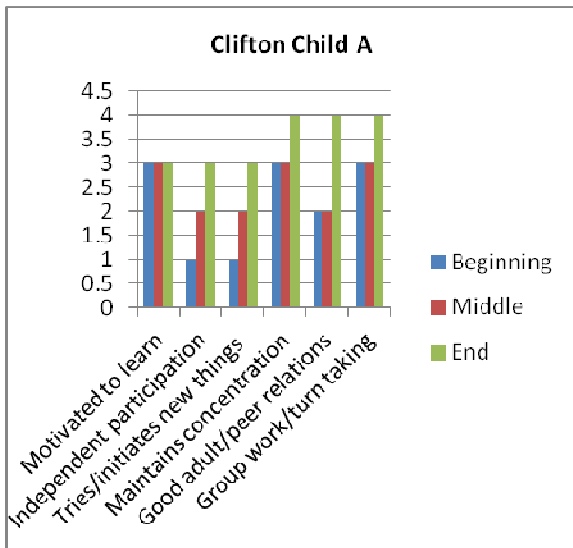
Alongside language development, it was also hoped the project would support aspects of children's social and personal development leading to improved social and psychological well being. As with language development, opportunities and experiences were integrated into project activities in order to help in the development of children's listening skills, concentration, co-operation, participation, independence and self-confidence.

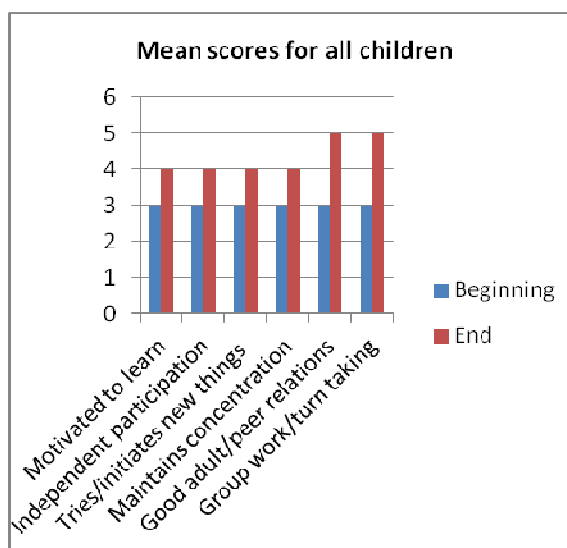
#### ***Analysis of CDRS scores***

The following graphs show how the tracked children were scored at the three key points in the project against the following indicators:

- Is interested, excited and motivated to learn
- Participates independently in activities with confidence
- Is confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group
- Can maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate
- Has a good relationship with adults and peers
- Can work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly

The final graph presents the mean scores for all children at the beginning and end of the project to show the overall rate of change.





The mean scores once again indicate overall improvement against all indicators by the end of the project. Scores for all indicators were Level 3 at the start of the project and it is interesting that the highest level of change (to Level 5 – full achievement) was for the two indicators focused on social development (good relationship with adults/peers and ability to work as a group/take turns). Scores for those indicators more concerned with personal development show slightly less change (progressing to Level 4). Individual graphs again show the older two children (Child B and Child D) already scoring highly at the start (Level 4 or 5 for most indicators) and progressing to full achievement for most indicators by the middle and all by the end. Child C’s graph reflects a fairly similar pattern with all indicators fully achieved by the end, and scoring Level 4 at the beginning for four out of the six indicators including those focusing on social skills. However for two indicators (independent/confident participation and confidence to speak in a familiar group and try/initiate new things) there was more marked change with progression from an initial Level 2. Child E shows significant progression against all indicators, starting at either Level 1 or 2, progressing to Level 3 by the middle for most and by the end achieving Level 4 for two and Level 5 for 4 indicators. Child F remains at Level 2 for nearly all indicators at both the start and middle of the project (showing little initial change) but progresses to Level 3 for nearly all by the end (except one where there is a gap in information). Child A showed no change against four indicators by the middle but, surprisingly, given his absence from later sessions, scored Level 4 for three of these (including the two social development indicators) at the end.

### **Observations and video footage of tracked children**

#### *Clifton Child A*

At the start of the project, observations indicate that Child A was reluctant to participate in most activities and stayed close to his mother during sessions, keeping his coat and scarf on although was interested in and watching the activities. This pattern continued in subsequent sessions but with small signs of more independent participation, particularly in instrument work. In Session 5, there seemed to be a break through and the practitioner noted: **Child A was very much involved with the music making than in previous weeks. He was not so shy, more confident, paying more attention and appeared to be more focused on the activity. He also stood away from his mother in comparison to other sessions when he would grip his others arms and legs.** The practitioner noted later in the session that he was confidently following the Project Leader’s lead during instrument work and was able to make a sound for recording. He was then observed **taking off his shoes which really demonstrated that he felt relaxed in comparison**



*to previous weeks when he wouldn't take off his coat.* The practitioner continued: **Child A was laughing at the other children's responses when they played their instruments and he waited very patiently when other children were playing** (ie turn taking). **From my observation, Child A's listening, confidence and the ability to take part is certainly improving.** This change was also borne out in video footage of the session which shows him choosing instruments independently, speaking about his instrument, playing and responding to signals and creating a sound and singing with actions. All of this indicates progress towards the indicators, particularly self confidence and participation within the group. An unfortunate setback occurred however when the parents withdrew from the sessions in order to encourage more independent participation. Child A became distressed and stopped attending, despite support and encouragement from practitioners and leaders. He did return for the final session with his mother and the observations indicate he maintained his previous level of confidence and participation.

#### *Clifton Child B*

Although at the start of the first session, Child B seemed reticent and unsure within the group, she was observed watching intently, following and copying actions and, with the encouragement of her father soon becoming involved in most activities. Towards the end of the session a practitioner noted **Child B's dad trying to show her what to do, but she told him she would do it herself**. As sessions progressed, both observations and video footage indicate that her confidence within the group increased considerably and alongside this, so did her enthusiasm and independent participation in activities. A practitioner noted in one session: **Child B A sits down at the keyboard before she is invited – she volunteers herself!** There are also instances noted of her increasing co-operation and interaction within the group and attentive listening. In another session a practitioner observed: **Child B was very patient and showed she was listening and even clapped after other children did their solos.** Subsequently in she was seen **playing with the other children and parents while her father stood a distance away. From what I observed, she was much more confident and willing to play and interact with others.** She is also observed on many occasions initiating ideas and taking the lead and in one session a practitioner observed: **When Mat started to play on the drums, Child A had a beater in her hand and started to lift it up and down saying 'go' and 'stop' to Mat as he was playing. Mat responded to this and followed her lead.** By the middle of the project, practitioners indicated she had fully achieved all but one of the indicators (maintaining concentration and attention) and by the end of the project she is reported to have fully achieved all of the indicators. It was also interesting to learn that practitioners felt the project had improved the social interaction of Child A and her father with other children and adults, and also each other: **the project has had an impact on her relationship with her dad. Both are 'EAL' and they have both been able to meet other children and parents. Her dad is more talkative and interacting and Child A has also been able to interact with other children and adults. The project has given them both an opportunity to be with the same group for 12 weeks and they have both gained some new friendships out of it.**

#### *Greenfields Child C*

At the start of the project, practitioners reported that Child C was quite shy and less outward going than some of the other children. However, observations and some video clips indicate that she made significant progress towards all of the indicators by the end of the project and that although not consistent from week to week, her participation and confidence developed quite considerably overall. In early sessions practitioners and leaders noted she would initially watch the Project Leader and other children before joining in herself, sometimes with considerable enthusiasm and excitement. She was also observed beginning to make confident choices, working well in the group, co-operating and able to take turns during instrument work. As indicated previously, she seemed particularly engaged and confident during the music

technology activities and was observed in later sessions-- participating independently when recording sounds and playing the keyboard, talking confidently and making suggestions to other children and the Project Leader, patiently waiting her turn to play on the keyboard and also initiating and taking the lead in using the microphone.

#### *Greenfields Child D*

As already evident in other areas of development, observations from both practitioners and leaders indicate that Child D was already fully achieving some of the indicators at the start of the project. In particular it was evident that she was able to participate independently and confidently in the project activities, at ease with new experiences, able to offer new ideas and suggestions and also enthusiastic and keen to learn. There are instances of this recorded in observations across the project and already detailed in previous sections. Attention was also drawn to her confident relationships with project adults and other children and her improved co-operation within the group. The Project Leader also noted that she and other children had become more able to share a musical environment including taking turns, standing back, listening to and appreciating other children's contributions. Overall, by the end of the project, it was reported that she had fully achieved all indicators by the end of the project.

#### *Hyson Green Child E*

Practitioners indicated that at the start of the project Child E was lacking confidence and reluctant to participate in the group without support from her mother. However, during the early sessions, observations indicate her gradually increasing involvement and interest in the activities. As evident in the previous section, there was a clear change in Session 5 when practitioners indicated she participated in all of the activities with more confidence and enjoyment and also independently from her mother. In addition she seemed more comfortable in her relationship with the Project Leader and had begun to interact with other children in the group. Also in this session the practitioner noted her choosing instruments independently, maintaining very focused concentration during a story (***She didn't change her sight, she was concentrating intently on Mat without looking in any other direction during the story***) and sharing with other children: ***She moved to another child when he tried to share his instrument in a quiet and nice way.*** In subsequent sessions this trend continued and Child E was noted continuing to participate more actively, independently and confidently and coping very well when her mother (and other parents) withdrew from the sessions. Towards the end of the project the practitioner noticed she was also confident to try new things (***She is very excited to try everything***) able to take turns and showing awareness of other children: ***Child E is very caring and kind and she claps for F when F recorded her voice on the computer.*** By the end of the project practitioners noted that she had made significant progress against all of the personal and social development indicators. It is also interesting to note the following comment from her mother: ***Of course my child has learnt many things from these sessions about music but the most important thing is that she has more confidence and is more able to have interactions with other people. Fantastic I think!***

#### *Hyson Green Child F*

Child F was also reluctant to participate at the beginning of the project and this was very much attributed by practitioners to her young age as well as her limited language. She was described as ***passive but watchful*** at first although did join in some activities (instrument work) alongside her father. Subsequently signs of increasing independence and confidence were noted and in Session 4, a practitioner observed: ***Child F copied Mat's big movements but refused Dads support on the copied actions. She also played her instrument independently and again copied Mat's actions.*** As with Child E, there appears to have been a particularly significant change approximately half way through and she is noted participating independently in most of the activities, speaking for the first time, showing enjoyment, trying out new things (exploring

instruments and **freely experimenting on the keyboard with the sounds it makes from her own voice**), taking turns in the group and showing awareness of other people. This pattern continued and towards the end of the project she was also observed singing for the first time with the group, confidently initiating and taking the lead in call and response activities and expressing excitement and pleasure when other children and adults responded. Although not recorded by a practitioner Child F appeared to make considerable progress towards the indicators by the end of the project. In addition, her father reported: **My child is now more confident to make music with others and she isn't as shy as before.**

### **Summary of findings in relation to outcome**

The preceding data suggests that all tracked children developed personally and socially whilst participating in the project. It is encouraging that three of them appear to have fully achieved all of the indicators by the end of the project although again it is not surprising that two of these were the older children who were already able to participate independently with confidence, maintain concentration and work co-operatively within a group situation. The most noticeable change appears to have taken place with those children who commenced the project with lower levels of confidence and less experience at interacting and co-operating with other children. Typically these were either younger and/or EAL children such as Child E who demonstrated the most change overall. As previously discussed, there seems to be a clear correlation between the change in their levels of confidence and participation and their achievement and progression in other areas of the project. It is also interesting to note the suggested social impact on Child B and her father as a result of the opportunities provided by the project to interact with other children and adults. Another point of interest is a trend in the means scores which shows that more progress was made against those indicators concerned with social skills overall.

As previously, the observations and video footage show similar patterns of development amongst other participating children. There are reports of some change in children who are already well developed personally and socially and there are also observations indicating more pronounced change in some children who commenced the project with lower levels of confidence and involvement. As with the tracked children, in these cases, by the end of the project, they appeared to be more confident, more involved in and enjoying activities, listening and concentrating for longer periods and able to work more co-operatively with other children and adults. Attention was drawn to one particular child in Greenfields who initially appeared to have little confidence, was very reluctant to participate and only showed interest in the music technology. As the sessions progressed he started to become more involved in some of the other activities and by the end of the project was joining in and quite confidently responding in the singing and instrument work as well as the music technology. The Project Leader indicated the degree of change in this particular child was the most marked amongst all the children in the setting. In another setting (Clifton), a marked improvement in social skills was noted in a child who at the start found it very difficult to co-operate within the group, to take turns and share with other children. He also found it difficult to listen and concentrate for longer periods of time. Observations indicate a change in his responses after his mother and the other parents withdrew from the sessions and by the end of the project a significant improvement was noted in his listening and attention span and also in his interactions and involvement within the group, particularly turn taking, sharing and talking to other children. This was also reported by his mother at the end of the project who wrote: **He seemed to co-operate more after a few weeks and was calmer when I wasn't there actually. He has also learnt to take turns and work with others, when to be loud and quiet and when to listen.**

The above findings indicate an overall positive change in some aspects of children's personal and social development during the project (including their participation, confidence, concentration, listening skills and co-operation) and consequently suggesting an improvement

in their social and psychological well being. It seems therefore that the overall outcome was achieved. As with language development, more rigorous investigation would be required to establish a direct connection with the project experiences and also to explore whether the changes in individual children were confined to the project context or whether they were also evident in other environments. However, evidence in both the observations and feedback from parents (about changes at home) do suggest a potential link between the changes in the children and the experiences provided.

## **2.3 Practice and development outcomes**

The following sections focus on outcomes and aspects of the project concerned with the reflective evaluation processes, the development of professional practice and the relationship between these two areas and the experiences and development of the children.

### **2.3.1 Reflective practice**

As indicated previously, the integration of reflective and systematic monitoring and evaluation into the development and delivery of Telling Tales was primarily intended to provide a body of robust evidence about the effects of music making and use of music technology with very young children and, as can be seen from the previous and subsequent sections, this outcome has clearly been achieved.

The processes (outlined earlier in the report) appear to have been implemented well. Session reflection forms were completed weekly at all settings documenting feedback from the project team and practitioners. There is evidence of open and constructive feedback, perceptive observations of children and a clear intention to reflect on learning points in order to improve practice and respond to children's needs. Alongside this practitioners made detailed observations of tracked child and linked them where appropriate to the CDRS indicators. Despite some occasional gaps and inconsistencies of approach, overall they provided a valuable and progressive insight into the children's responses and development. The CDRS was completed correctly in most cases and provided a simple but effective measure of the change in children against the key indicators. As indicated previously, the MERS was also completed in all settings, but not always by the same person as advised, which may have resulted in some inconsistencies and differences in perception against the scale criteria.

Overall this combination of approaches seems to have been effective in encouraging genuine and good quality reflective practice amongst the project team and the practitioners and has resulted in a comprehensive, credible and robust portfolio of both quantitative and qualitative evidence which clearly demonstrates the change, progress and learning stories of both the tracked and other children across four areas of development (including musical and music technology skills but also language and personal/social skills).

The reflective evaluation process was also intended to inform and develop the practice of those adults involved in the project and to ensure that this remained focused on how best to respond to children in order to support their progression and development during the project. The aforementioned approaches were clearly effective in this respect, enabling the Project Leader, trainee and practitioners to reflect on and refine their practice collectively and individually in accordance with the needs and responses of the children. The weekly session reflection sheets in particular demonstrated leaders and practitioners continually reflecting on the appropriateness of activities and delivery approaches, identifying issues and challenges, documenting children's responses and needs, considering how best to respond to these and taking action where appropriate. Ultimately this appears to have resulted in improved and

developed practice, a high quality experience for the children and enhanced learning and development outcomes for both children and adults.

Working in this way was new to the Project Leader and it is interesting to note some of his perspectives. For example, on a practical level some challenges were encountered, particularly in relation to balancing the musical delivery with the administration of the evaluation process and ensuring practitioners in settings were fulfilling their requirements in this respect. However he clearly recognised the value of the process and drew attention to the way in which the reflective opportunities within it had enabled him to focus his thinking and practice on child development outcomes much more than before. He emphasised how this had influenced the ongoing planning and delivery process which, each week, considered and responded to children's participation and needs in relation to the development outcomes. The Project Leader found this way of looking at children's development rigorous, specific and clear and he indicated that he would continue to adopt this approach in all future projects.

Practitioners also responded positively to the evaluation process and the Project Leader felt that the embedded reflective approach had resulted in a much more committed and 'serious' response from the settings involved than in some previous projects. They indicated that the structured and informal opportunities for reflection involving the whole team had been invaluable for sharing ideas and feedback, particularly about children's needs and how best to respond to them. Some also remarked on the benefits of using detailed observation and indicated how they had learned from the approach of other settings (particularly Clifton) in this respect and that they would continue to apply what they had learnt in other groups and activities in future.

### **2.3.2 Action research (understanding and mastering music technology in the Early Years)**

The action research theme provided a more specific focus to aspects of the reflective process and as outlined earlier, this centred on informing and developing practice in music technology work with the purpose **of establishing an understanding and mastery of music technology in the Early Years**. Exploration of the theme was integrated into the overall reflective practice and evaluation process and was considered within the context of the session reflections, observations and video footage. The resulting evidence concerning children's activity and participation in music technology has already been considered earlier. Some more general considerations, drawing on interviews and observations of practice are explored below.

As previously indicated, it was intended that the music technology element of the project would provide an opportunity to pilot the use of newly developed software especially accessible to very young children. Although much developmental work was undertaken by the Project Leader, he was advised by two commercial software developers not to proceed further in view of the high financial risk linked to such a venture in the current economic climate. As a result, plans to proceed with the software development were put on hold and previous software had to be used which meant it was not possible for the children to operate the software independently as planned. This proved frustrating for the Project Leader, who was hoping to use the project as an opportunity to build on his previous work through extending the opportunities and experiences available to the children and addressing some of the practical challenges encountered with the previous software. However, whilst the children were not able to gain direct experience of independently using more accessible software, the revised focus of work still enabled them to actively learn about and creatively respond to the process of recording, manipulating and exploring different sounds.

Prior to the project, none of the settings had any significant experience of using music technology and although the MERS indicates that Greenfields and Clifton had some music software on their computer, this was rarely used by children and there was no active involvement of staff in such activities. However, feedback suggests that all welcomed the opportunity to learn more through the project and responded positively to the experiences provided. The experience at individual settings is considered below.

At **Clifton**, the Project Leader was particularly encouraged by the response of the children and drew attention to how, as a group, they had been able to develop a particularly sophisticated understanding of and relationship with the music technology processes. He felt that a number of factors had contributed to this. For example, having a small group of children had meant that individuals were able to have more frequent and prolonged access to the music technology activities and this had enabled them to extend their experiences and progress their learning slightly further than in some other settings. In particular attention was drawn to how there was more scope to link the sound exploration aspect with story making and how children were able to have more involvement in creating their own stories and placing the sounds they had made within the narrative. It is evident from the following comments by a practitioner that they were clearly beginning to understand the connection between these two elements:

***All the children are -enjoying the music technology, particularly when they are working with sounds related to the stories and they really understand the connection between the sound and story elements. She goes on to explain: The children made sounds with leaves scrunching, water pouring and bells. They recorded these three sounds and then put a story together. They really enjoyed that and understood the processes and how the sounds related to the story.***

Alongside this the practitioner illustrated how an approach adopted by the Project Leader was effective in helping the children increase their understanding about the relationship between the keyboard and sampled sounds they had made:

***At first they didn't understand that the sound they made on the keyboard that was played back was their sound. Now they do. It was good when Mat put spots on the keyboard as this helped the children to understand the different possibilities it offered. They were always going for the middle of the keyboard before but now they have learnt that playing different notes will have a different effect . They have also recognised that there are low sounds and high sounds on the keyboard.***

By the end of the project, it appears that the understanding of the children at Clifton had evolved to such an extent, that the work became much less 'directed' and more responsive to the children's lead arising from their new knowledge and experience.

The earlier comments from the practitioner show her increasing her own understanding of music technology and by the end of the project she indicated that the specific training and experiences in the sessions had enabled her and other practitioners to develop sufficient knowledge and confidence to build on the music technology work further. Since completion, the setting has responded positively to additional training provided by the Project Leader and at the time of writing, a further visit was planned to observe practitioners delivering sampling activities with their colleagues prior to working with children. This is encouraging and indicates good scope for continuing music technology at Clifton in future.

At **Greenfields**, there was a similarly positive response from both children and practitioners although practical challenges resulting from the size of the group appear to have affected the children's engagement and progress initially. During the first few sessions, in accordance with the ethos of the setting, practitioners were keen for the whole group to access the music

technology activities together. However it became clear that working in this way was not effective as some children became disengaged whilst waiting their turn. Eventually it was recognised that the quality of experience for the children would be much improved by working in a smaller group. Feedback and observations indicates this was the case and that the children's engagement and understanding progressed more quickly thereafter although, because of the initial delay, the group as a whole was not able to develop quite as far as hoped by the end of the project. However, in view of the strong commitment of the practitioners and their determination to build on the opportunities provided, the Project Manager felt there was considerable scope for the children to progress further in the longer term.

Practitioners at Greenfields drew attention to how the music technology had addressed some areas of the Early Years and Foundation Stage goals (including ICT and Knowledge and Understanding of the World). However, they also felt the original outcome and indicators relating to the planned new software were too ambitious for the age of many of the children in the group. In the end, as the software was not used, this concern became less relevant but it is interesting to note nevertheless and was acknowledged by the Project Leader who indicated he would give more consideration to EYFS goals when setting outcomes and indicators for future work and also in the development of the new software. With regard to the latter, practitioners felt there was clear need for a visually attractive and user friendly programme that that provided opportunities for independent use by children of an appropriate age (between 40 to 60 months). It was also suggested this would be of benefit for practitioners.

In considering professional practice, it was agreed that the music technology work had been the most developmental aspect of the project for Greenfields practitioners and that through the training and sessions, they had been able to learn about the processes involved along with the children and consequently felt committed to continuing the work. This is clearly reflected in end of project MERS which indicated an increase in staff members playing an active part in music technology activities. It was also encouraging to learn that this change was already happening during the project with one practitioner replicating the work with another group of children in the setting. In addition, there was clear commitment to providing appropriate staff support to ensure practitioners were able to continue delivering small group music technology work within the wider group of children. This indicates there is good potential for sustaining and building on the work at Greenfields.

At **Hyson Green**, because of the limited language of the children and their slightly younger age range, the Project Leader felt there were less opportunities and insufficient time to achieve more extended engagement with music technology (eg through linking with story work) and the work focused predominantly on recording and playing back sampled sounds on the keyboard with very little discussion about the sounds. However he was encouraged by the level of understanding of the process achieved by the children by the end of the project (particularly recognising different sound effects and the relationship between them and the keyboard). Also, given their young age, he was impressed by their patience during their process and their keen interest in the activities each week. As with the other two settings, practitioners also acknowledged the value of the work for the children and noted in particular how it had resulted in more active listening and increased self-confidence, self expression and creativity.

Practitioners at Hyson Green also appear to have welcomed the practice development experiences offered by the music technology work and felt their own confidence and skills had increased in being able to support the children in using the software and equipment to record and manipulate sounds. The Project Leader remarked on their open minded response and an evident determination to increase their knowledge and facility in using the equipment and

software in order to build on the work in future. However since the project this unfortunately seems less likely because of staff shortages and changes.

Overall therefore, it seems the project was successful in increasing understanding of music technology as part of Early Years practice amongst the practitioners at each of the settings. The opportunities provided offered a new experience and enabled them to learn about recording and manipulating sounds and how to use these to support children's learning, both musically and creatively but also in other ways, particularly through linking with story and singing activities. The reflective evaluation process played a key role in this respect, providing opportunities to continually observe and reflect on children's participation, learning and progression and to refine and develop practice in response to this. With regard to the 'mastery' of music technology, the training and modelling by the Project Leader has gone some way to developing knowledge, skills and confidence amongst most practitioners, offering scope for continued development in some settings. Unfortunately this now seems less likely at Hyson Green. However the continued work at Greenfields is encouraging and it seems that the additional training for practitioners at Clifton will help them to take the work forward. With this in mind, the Project Leader emphasised the importance of practitioners 'practising' what they learn in the training back in their settings if they are to sustain their new knowledge and skills and made the following observation in this respect:

***It is often a pattern with this work that the training sessions go well but the momentum is lost because practitioners are unable to practise the techniques, therefore losing their knowledge and confidence as a result. It will be interesting to see if the settings fall prey to this habit or whether they really will advance with it.***

With regard to the Project Leader's own development, it is interesting to note that he felt there was not as much progression in his own understanding of Early Years music technology as hoped, mainly because of the unavailability of the new software. However, although the practical challenges of the old software remained the same, he found the reflective process invaluable in gaining more understanding about children's interaction with and responses to it and this was able to influence his practice, particularly in being able to encourage children to explore and discuss the nature of their sounds. Nevertheless he felt the development of accessible, user friendly and age appropriate technology was crucial to moving further forward in future, particularly for children but also for practitioners.

### **2.3.3 Perspectives on other aspects of practice**

#### ***Session formats***

Sessions included a careful balance of adult guided and child initiated approaches and a coherent and integrated mix of linked activities. The specific format and duration however was flexible, varying from setting to setting and clearly responsive to the different nature, needs and environment of each group. As evident above, the reflective process played a key role in this respect, focusing on children's responses and needs and adapting the timing and content of activities accordingly. In Clifton for example, the dedicated space, the opportunity to use a sensory room, the small group size and the pace of development of the children led to a more free flow approach and although sessions continued to include the key activities, their delivery and timing was less structured and happened in response to the children's lead. In Greenfields the younger age group, larger group size, setting routines and open environment required a more structured and adult led approach with less scope for free play and child led activities initially, although this evolved as the children developed. It is clear the project team and practitioners worked effectively together to achieve solutions that were responsive to and in the



best interests of the children. At Hyson Green, the duration of sessions and activities within sessions tended to be shorter because of the young age of the children.

### ***Song repertoire and singing***

The repertoire of songs provided a central focus to the project and evidence suggests that this seems to have worked effectively in all settings. Songs were appropriate for the age and language capability of most children. Lyrics and melodies were simple but attractive and it is apparent that the children engaged with and enjoyed them, including those who were reluctant to sing. The limited pitch range was suitable for the children's voices as was the use of simple words and repeated short phrases. Through weekly repetition, children were able to become familiar with and learn the songs and sing them with increasing confidence. They also responded well to the interactive opportunities and it is evident these were effective in encouraging them to use their imagination and stimulating their creativity.

### ***Instrument work***

The practice demonstrated in this aspect of the project was particularly effective. The combination of instruments already available in settings plus those provided by the Project Leader meant that children had access to good quality, engaging and varied instruments which were interesting and exciting to play. The appropriate playing techniques for the instruments were well modelled and children were also encouraged to use them freely and imaginatively. An appropriate and responsive balance of guided and free play instrument work enabled children to learn and apply different musical concepts but also to engage in freer exploration including improvisation and call and response activities. As already indicated, the latter appears to have been particularly successful in communicating with and encouraging greater self expression and creativity in some children with limited language. Instrumental play was also successfully integrated with singing and story work which provided further opportunities for children to consolidate and extend their instrumental and musical skills and to develop their imagination and creativity.

### ***Musical concepts***

Children were provided with meaningful and practical experience of basic musical concepts such as fast/slow, loud/soft and high/low. Activities to support understanding of these concepts were effectively integrated into other aspects of the project and children were able to learn and consolidate their experiences particularly through listening, singing and playing instruments but also some elements of the music technology work. Children learnt through following and responding to practical signals and gestures modelled by adults and in some cases children consolidated and demonstrated their understanding by taking the lead themselves.

### ***Stories as a focus***

The project demonstrated effective use of stories in providing a focus for sessions and as a context for creating links between other activities particularly the creation and use of sounds in the music technology work, but also with the singing and instrument work. Overall this resulted in a more meaningful and coherent framework for supporting the children's musical learning and also other aspects of their development such as language and communication. The value of this way of working is evident in the following comment by a practitioner:

***I found the training in mixing sound and stories particularly interesting and useful and have learnt that you can build a story around the sounds made by the children which follows their lead and incorporates their sounds. Literacy and music are often separated but in this project***

***there is a more integrated approach and a more coherent way of supporting the children's development – musical, language, confidence, communication etc.***

### ***Reflective and responsive musical leadership***

As can be seen elsewhere in the report, the innovative design and concept of Telling Tales, the activities and approaches involved and the integration of reflective evaluation are entirely attributable to the refreshing and forward thinking approach and practice of the Project Leader. Alongside this he was also an effective project organiser, trainer and leader/facilitator of the activities with children in the settings. With regard to the latter, it is strongly evident from feedback and video clips that he was a skilled and inspirational music leader who was able to engage, communicate and interact effectively with the children. There was considerable praise from practitioners in this respect and also for his reflective and responsive approach which was consistently focused on the needs of the children. There is ongoing evidence of this in the session reflection documentation. Similar comments were made about the project trainee.

Some typical comments made by practitioners are as follows:

***We have very positive communication with Mat and Kirsten about the children's responses and needs. Mat is always involved with the children and he is very responsive and reflective in this respect.***

***Mat was always taking the lead from the children. He responded to each individual child and provided praise and encouragement throughout.***

***Mat is constantly reading the children and responding to them – this is a key skill.***

***Mat is so good at adapting and responding to children and engaging them and following their needs and responses. This approach from Mat and Kirsten helps the learning and enjoyment of the children.***

***Mat is very good at making stories in response to the children's ideas. He follows their lead and works with them. This is what has made it so enjoyable and empowering for them.***

### **2.3.4 Development of Project Leader, trainee, practitioners and parents**

#### ***Project Leader***

It is evident that the reflective evaluation and outcomes focused process provided significant professional development opportunities and experiences for the Project Leader which in some cases had a profound influence on his Early Years practice. Many of these have already been considered. In addition he identified a few other key areas of learning and development as follows:

- Increasing the number of sessions from 6 to 12 was a key improvement to the project. At both Greenfields and Clifton, the longer sustained period of activity enabled the children and practitioners to 'settle' into the project, to build up relationships with the project team and to progress and develop their skills and experiences much further. However in view of the particularly committed response of the parents and the significant development of the children at Clifton, the Project Leader felt there was scope to take the work there even further through an extended project. Similarly, it was suggested that

additional sessions for the group at Hyson Green would have been beneficial, although for different reasons which are explored below.

- As indicated previously, recruitment of families was challenging at two settings, The Meadows (the setting which was withdrawn from the project) and Hyson Green (the replacement setting). At Hyson Green, considerable effort was made by the staff team to encourage families to attend but many appeared initially reluctant to try out an unfamiliar activity. A small group was recruited by the third session, but it was not until later that the group became more cohesive therefore limiting the scope for development. Furthermore, as the project became established and better known, more people wanted to join in. Whilst encouraging, this presented its own challenges, particularly when some families wanted to join towards the end of the project cycle. It was agreed this was too late to be of value and would disturb the progression and equilibrium of the other children in the group. The Project Leader felt that the group could have benefited from additional sessions in order to provide more time for families to try out the new and unfamiliar activities and settle into the project.
- The Project Manager suggested the recruitment difficulties encountered at The Meadows were more attributable to a lack of interest in and understanding of the value of the project and that they could have been addressed with greater commitment and support from staff and more effective management and organisation. Although reluctant to terminate the project, he felt frustrated by the wasted opportunity and, on the basis of previous similar experience, felt this was the best course of action to take. Unfortunately this type of response is not uncommon in projects of this nature and although a difficult decision to make, it was wisely taken and prevented further waste of time and resources and enabled a more receptive setting to benefit from the opportunities provided.
- Following attendance at an Early Years conference, the Project Leader introduced a more child led approach into the project. He found the environment at Clifton (with a smaller group and dedicated space plus a sensory room) particularly conducive to this approach and began to include opportunities for instrumental free play and spontaneous movement and to adopt a more free flow approach, allowing sessions to evolve in response to the children's lead and ideas. Whilst initially challenging, he found the approach liberating and acknowledged the benefits for the children, particularly with regard to developing creativity, independence and confidence. He also pointed out the potential for introducing the new software into such an environment and indicated his intention to continue working in this way in future.
- As already evident, at Hyson Green and Greenfields, some children were considerably younger than the target age range and as a consequence were only able to engage with the project in a way that was appropriate to their developmental stage. However, through the reflective practice approach, the Project Leader (and also the trainee and practitioners) was able to learn from and respond to their needs and those of the other children in an appropriate way. A case in point was the approach to the story telling at Hyson Green, where to meet the needs of the younger children involved (who also had limited language), it became important to modify the approach and work with simpler repeated stories and supporting visual aids. The Project Leader indicated that he had become more aware of the wide range of potential differentiation required in Early Years practice.
- Through working with a number of children with limited language, the Project Manager realised the value of instrument work as a means of non verbal communication. For

some children this appeared to have been a liberating experience and had provided them with a new means of self expression and musical creativity which had in turn seemed to increase their self confidence. He found this aspect of the project particularly interesting and was keen to explore it further using a wider and better quality range of instruments to enhance the quality of experience for the children.

### ***Trainee***

Recruited through Youth Music's Musicleader network, the project trainee had recently completed an MA in community music and was keen to extend her experience in Early Years music practice, a field in which she had limited experience. Pre project induction opportunities included attending practitioner training and also individual sessions with the Project Leader, both of which appear to have been effective in introducing the trainee to the project aims, outcomes and ethos. The main focus of the training centred on the sessions in settings and feedback from the trainee indicates that she was able to learn from approaches modelled by the Project Leader, observing the children and playing an active role in the session reflection activities. As the project progressed she was given opportunities to lead specific activities in sessions and to lead some whole sessions which she found challenging but invaluable in terms of building confidence. Alongside this, she attended a Musicleader Early Years event and was provided with ongoing advice and support by the Project Leader, both informally and in discussion meetings after sessions. She was also offered training by the Project Leader in response to specific interests or needs although it appears this was not really taken up, despite regular encouragement to do so.

Feedback from the Project Leader and practitioners indicates that whilst lacking in confidence initially, the trainee responded in a consistently committed and professional way to the opportunities provided and to her role in the sessions. As the project progressed, it was evident that her general understanding and experience of Early Years music practice increased steadily and she became more confident in leading and delivering activities independently in sessions. Feedback from practitioners was particularly encouraging in this respect and this provided evidence of a responsive and supportive approach with the children.

It is evident that the trainee learnt from her role in the reflective process and recorded some perceptive observations on the session reflection sheets at the end of each session, which she became responsible for completing each week. She also found the instrument work a particularly interesting and developmental aspect of her learning and indicated that the approaches and practice modelled by the Project Leader had informed her own practice considerably in this respect. However, whilst supporting the Project Leader in some aspects of the music technology work (for eg, helping the children record their sounds with the microphone), it seems that she gained little 'hands on' experience of using the software to record and process the sounds and found it quite challenging to take over the lead from the Project Leader. In future, it may be worth including more structured and supported opportunities for trainees to become familiar with the software and equipment and to take a more active role in leading the activities.

The trainee felt well supported by the Project Leader during the project who she indicated was always accessible and provided ongoing constructive and helpful guidance and feedback. It is surprising therefore that she was not more responsive to the more bespoke training offered from the Project Leader. This may have been due to a lack of confidence and it seems in some respects that the training structure was perhaps too informal for the needs of this particular trainee and that a more structured approach with a more formal training programme might have been beneficial. It is encouraging however that towards the end of the project the trainee felt that she had gained sufficient skills and experience independently deliver music

making activities in other local Early Years groups and was planning to set up a music making group of her own for toddlers. Within these sessions she indicated that she was applying some the approaches and practice learned during the project and also felt sufficiently confident to try out some new approaches of her own.

### **Practitioners**

Feedback indicates that a few practitioners had previously received some Early Years musical training (mainly in singing) and, as a result were already fairly experienced in delivering regular singing activities at their settings. In view of their more limited knowledge of instrument and music technology work, they particularly keen to extend their experience in these areas, but were appreciative of the other broader developmental opportunities offered.

There was general consensus across all settings that the dedicated training activities along with the modelling in sessions and the informal support from the Project Leader were effective in developing skills, understanding and confidence in music technology work and practitioner responses and further development in this respect have already been explored. In addition they drew attention to how they had gained valuable new knowledge and approaches in other areas, particularly the instrument and story work. Practitioners felt that as well as learning about the practical implementation and use of these approaches, the training had also crucially explained their purpose and potential value in relation to children's development and learning. Overall they indicated that all aspects of the training, along with the reflective practice ethos (again explored earlier) had both informed their professional practice in Early Years Music making and also increased their understanding about its wider benefits to children.

Some particularly interesting comments demonstrating areas of learning (other than music technology) are as follows:

***The training and support activities have definitely helped to increase my confidence in participating in the sessions. They worked well and gave me a clear idea of how exciting the sessions and project would be and I have also gained lots of new ideas and knowledge. For example, I learnt about more musical concepts and musical signals (eg for stop and start), how to link use of instruments with learning through stories and how to bring music into stories through making sounds and rhythms.***

***I definitely feel more confident with the music technology, the stories and also the instruments. Using the call and response approach (following the lead of the children and responding back) has been particularly illuminating as it really encourages the children's self expression and confidence and I will use this in sessions in future. I already felt quite confident about this, but this project has enhanced my experience even more.***

***Before the project I did not have much musical experience or knowledge and I have learnt so much. Along with the children through watching Mat I have learnt how to play the instruments properly and we can now hold and use them properly. My confidence has really increased and I feel I can now do more structured activities as well as freeplay.***

At the end of the project, most practitioners indicated that they planned to build on and continue to implement their new skills and experiences in other groups in their settings and also in some cases share it with other practitioners. Unfortunately as previously mentioned, this now seems less likely to happen in the short term at Hyson Green because of staffing changes. However, with the additional music technology training at Clifton, there is good scope for continuity there. Furthermore, at Greenfields, it was very encouraging to learn that since the project, practitioners have been running more structured music and music technology activities

with other groups at the setting and are intending to provide opportunities for increased parental involvement. In addition, they were also intending to share knowledge gained through the project with other practitioners at a PEEP training course. A practitioner explained this as follows:

***The sessions have given us the confidence to do more group music sessions at Greenfields and we now also feel confident to begin to involve parents now. In addition we will be taking our knowledge and experience to a PEEP course. Mat's sessions were very exciting and with PEEP's emphasis on language development, self esteem and taking turns etc, Mat's project links really well with these. We are really prepared to take these ideas further at the nursery and to PEEP.***

Although disappointed with the situation at Hyson Green, the Project Leader was encouraged by the scope for continued development at the other two settings and the response of the practitioners there. He was also impressed with the overall enthusiasm shown by most practitioners during the project and their clear interest in and commitment to extending their knowledge and understanding of Early Years music practice. However at the end of the project he raised a couple of key points as follows:

- Even though practitioners appeared to respond positively to the music technology aspect of the training, the Project Manager felt this could have been followed up more actively by some practitioners. As indicated earlier, he felt that it was crucial for practitioners to make time to independently 'practice' what they had learnt back in their settings in order for the information to be retained and utilised in the longer term.
- Although impressed by the strong commitment to the reflective practice approach and the level of detail and perception in some of the observations, this meant practitioners were less actively involved in the activities and therefore possibly not gaining sufficient hands on experience to help them embed their new skills and experience.

## **Parents**

Initially it was planned to offer formal volunteering opportunities to young parents with the intention of them becoming actively involved in the delivery of the project. However, this became impractical for a number of reasons. At Greenfields for example, as the setting was a day care nursery, it was not really possible for parents to participate as they were working although it is encouraging that one parent did take time off work to attend a session as her child was so enthusiastic about the project. At both Hyson Green and Clifton, staff were stretched to full capacity and unable to take on the additional responsibility of managing volunteers. The recruitment issues at Hyson Green also added to the challenges in this respect. Nevertheless at both Clifton and Hyson Green, parents were invited to attend the sessions and practitioners and the project team drew attention to their committed and enthusiastic response and their obvious interest in what the children were doing and learning and how they were developing. It is encouraging to see evidence in both video clips and observations of parents actively involved in singing and instrumental work, supporting their children, responding to them and modelling some of the activities and actions. This demonstrates that they themselves had learnt from the practice and modelling of the project team and setting practitioners along with their children.

In both settings, after a while, it was agreed to ask the parents to withdraw from the sessions in order to encourage the children to participate more independently. This decision was accepted by the parents who remained close by during sessions. Whilst this proved distressing for one child (Child A – see earlier), the other children coped well with the change and, as indicated previously, seemed to progress and gain confidence more quickly. Practitioners also

pointed out how the change in arrangements had actually provided valuable opportunities for social interaction between some of the parents, particularly those from other countries. Within the sessions, without their parents, there is also evidence of increased social interaction between the children. Some parents did however suggest that once they had stopped participating in the sessions, they would have appreciated some feedback about their child after each session. This in itself is encouraging and shows a sustained interest in the development of their children.

At the end of the project, feedback from parents at both Hyson Green and Clifton indicated that they had genuinely valued the opportunity to take part, recognised the benefits to their children and in some cases were supporting their children to continue activities at home including borrowing instruments from a local toy library. There is also similar encouraging feedback from the Greenfields parent. A few typical comments are as follows:

***Since the sessions have finished I have borrowed musical equipment and instruments from the toy library. My child has really enjoyed this.***

***S has thoroughly enjoyed the project. I feel that she has learnt a lot and I will take what she has learnt and continue to develop this.***

***Summary of findings in relation to outcome (invested in the skills base of the practitioners, trainee and parent volunteers)***

It is evident from the preceding sections that the project went some way towards achieving the outcome concerning investment in the skills base of practitioners, trainee and parent volunteers. Through the training and development opportunities provided practitioners were able to build on existing experience (for example in singing) but also develop and in some cases apply new skills and knowledge in a range of less familiar aspects of Early Years music practice including music technology, instrument work and story telling. They also gained understanding about the potential to link music with other activities as part of a broader coherent learning framework to support children's learning. In addition, along with members of the project team, they learnt about the practical implementation and value of reflective practice and evaluation processes and how, through observing and responding to the children, they could inform and develop their practice. Alongside the practitioners, the trainee also gained similar skills and experience in Early Years music practice and was able to enhance and develop her music leadership skills, particularly in instrument work, although less so in music technology. Although it was not possible to develop the skills of parent volunteers as such, through actively involving and encouraging parents in some of the sessions alongside their children, they learnt about different aspects of Early Years music making and how to best to support their children's learning and participation in these activities.

### **3. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Summary**

1. The findings of the evaluation process clearly indicate that overall, Telling Tales was a successful and forward thinking project offering high quality music making and innovative music technology activities to groups of young children, their parents and practitioners located at children's centres in Nottingham.

2. The project offered an evolved and extended programme of sessions in which stories provided an imaginative context for other activities, particularly sound exploration in music technology work but also singing and instrument work. Together these resulted in a meaningful and coherent framework for supporting not only their musical development but also other aspects of children's learning including language and communication and personal and social development. The framework was also flexible and clearly responsive to the differentiated needs of the children.
3. The children's centres were located in areas of need and had some, although limited previous music provision and experience. Lack of staff commitment and linked recruitment difficulties in one setting led to its withdrawal by the Project Leader. The appropriate action taken in this respect enabled a more receptive centre to benefit from the project opportunities. Whilst not always easy to achieve in practice, the situation clearly demonstrated the importance of choosing, where possible, 'mature' and committed settings with the capacity to take on a project this nature and to be able to successfully accommodate the new ideas and challenges it might bring with it. This was clearly the case with the other settings where practitioners and staff embraced the project with an open mind and showed considerable commitment, enthusiasm and a determination to capitalise on the developmental opportunities provided.
4. Groups at Clifton and Hyson Green were set up especially for the project and actively involved both parents and children recruited locally. Staff worked hard to address further recruitment challenges at Hyson Green where families took time to fully engage with the project. The other group (Greenfields) involved children of working parents drawn from a day nursery.
5. Children were from varying socio/economic backgrounds and diverse in race and ethnicity with approximately 50% categorised as EAL. This combined with a slightly younger age range than expected (between 2 to 4 years) clearly influenced how some children were able to engage with the project and had implications for the content and approaches. It is strongly evident that the project team was aware of and sensitive to the differing learning needs of the children and, as a result of the reflective ethos of the project, was able to respond appropriately and effectively.
6. Increasing the number of sessions from 6 (in previous projects) to 12 was a key improvement which resulted in a more sustained and continuous period of activity that enabled the children to progress and develop further than before. This was less evident at Hyson Green where, because of the recruitment difficulties, the group did not become established until well into the project thereby limiting the scope for progression. In such circumstances and if financial resources allow, additional sessions could provide more time for families to try out and settle into previously unfamiliar activities.
7. Singing continued to be a core element of the project and the repertoire of regularly repeated interactive songs (composed by the Project Leader and in some cases, directly responsive to children's ideas) fitted well with the developmental stage of the children (simple structures, limited pitch, simple but engaging melodies, simple words and short and repeated phrases) and also offered musical interest and variety. Alongside this, the interactive opportunities were successful in stimulating imagination and use of language.
8. The practice and approaches used in instrument work appear to have been particularly successful. Practitioners understood the importance of using high quality and varied instruments to stimulate children's interest and engagement and through effective



modelling children learnt how to manipulate them correctly. A careful balance of guided and free play approaches enabled most children to gain experience of simple musical concepts and develop creative skills including improvisation and musical dialogue. Of particular interest is how instrumental play seemed able to provide some EAL, limited language and less confident children with an effective means of non verbal communication and self expression. There are encouraging examples of some children confidently using and interacting with instruments and in some cases initiating purposeful and sophisticated improvised responses. This may be an area worth considering for further research and investigation.

9. Music technology is currently an undeveloped area of Early Years music practice and therefore added an innovative aspect to this project. Plans to trial new child friendly software were put on hold because of high financial risk. Although previous less user friendly software had to be used and children were unable to work as freely and independently as hoped, they still clearly benefited from an unusual opportunity to actively learn about and creatively respond to the process of recording and manipulating different sounds.
10. Whilst the changed focus of the music technology work was slightly disappointing, the project remained genuinely forward thinking. In particular, placing a reflective evaluation and outcomes focused process at the heart of Telling Tales has been a crucial development and arguably the project's most innovative aspect. It is evident that the process had a profound influence on the project and the people and organisations involved and it is suggested there is considerable potential for Telling Tales to provide a model of practice in this respect and demonstrate the value of reflective practice to other projects.
11. Project outcomes and indicators provided a clear framework for the reflective process and were mainly concerned with four areas of children's development (music technology skills, musical skills (singing and playing instruments), language and communication skills and personal and social skills). They were also actively used to inform ongoing planning and reflection and how best to respond to children's needs in relation to the outcomes. This more focused way of exploring children's development clearly worked well in Telling Tales and was a particularly illuminating and developmental experience for the Project Manager. It is encouraging therefore that he will continue to work this way in future.
12. A comprehensive range of processes provided an effective framework for both reflective practice on and also systematic evidence collection and analysis. Session reflection forms gave rise to honest reflection on practice learning points in response to children's needs. The CDRS was a basic but fairly effective means of monitoring change across the four areas of development in a sample of 'tracked' children and backed up with video footage and insightful, perceptive observations. Interviews with practitioners, the project team and parents provided further evidence. The MERS was another simple but again useful device to indicate change in musical provision at the settings and linked with this, the quality of experience for the children in the longer term.
13. Together these approaches resulted in a comprehensive and robust portfolio of evidence which demonstrates that overall positive change and progress took place in children during the project across the four key areas of development, thereby meeting all of the specified outcomes in this respect - a significant achievement for the project.

14. There is clear evidence for example of increased musical skills (both in singing and instrumental playing) in most children. By the end of the project it showed some children able to sing songs more purposefully, from memory, in time, in tune, with actions and with instruments. Not all children developed to this extent and some remained reluctant to actively participate in singing activities but in most cases these children were responsive to the songs during sessions and some were heard singing at home. With regard to instruments at one setting in particular, there is clear evidence of children's progression over an extended period which, for example, shows them being able to use instruments in different ways, improving their time keeping, becoming more purposeful during improvised activities and gaining understanding of musical concepts.
15. With regard to music technology the evidence suggests that most children increased their skills and were able to understand and respond creatively to the process of recording, manipulating and recording sounds. A number of children began to use and understand vocabulary linked to the process and in some cases this became increasingly sophisticated. Not unexpectedly, some EAL children and children with limited language made less progress in this respect.
16. The evidence also shows an overall increase in children's use and acquisition of language. Some children with already well established language began to use new (project specific) vocabulary and more descriptive language. There is also evidence amongst EAL children of increasing use of words and vocabulary encountered during stories and songs.
17. With regard to improved social and psychological well being, the evidence again indicates an overall positive change. Although there was some progression in those children already well developed in this respect, in general there was more pronounced change in children who commenced the project with lower levels of confidence and involvement. By the end of the project, their participation had increased and they appeared more confident. There was also evidence in some children of increased co-operation and concentration.
18. In view of the previous limited experience of the children and the evident high quality content, practice and leadership, it seems highly likely that the positive changes and increases in musical and music technology skills were brought about by the project. It is more difficult to attribute the overall increase in language skills and personal/social development directly to the project without more in-depth research. Nevertheless, the change is encouraging and the evidence available in both observations and video footage do suggest that some aspects of the children's development in these areas are commensurate with the experiences provided.
19. Although the evidence shows all child development outcomes were achieved and an overall increase in children's progress in these areas, the pace and degree of change was variable which is to be expected given the different ages, developmental stages and experiences of the children. Typically the changes in older children tended to be less marked as they commenced the project with already well developed skills. Some of the most marked changes were evident in EAL children, some of whom commenced the project with limited language and low confidence levels. With these children there is also often an interesting correlation between the change in their levels of confidence and participation and their achievement and progression in other areas of the project.
20. Alongside children's development, the MERS picked up some positive changes in provision for music making at each setting brought about by the project. Whilst there

was not as much change as expected overall, the project appears to have brought about positive developments in singing which is not surprising and also outdoor musical play with instruments which possibly reflects the strong focus on instrumental work. In some other areas where there was no change, a high level of provision was maintained (for example in the way instruments were set out). Although slightly disappointing that only one setting (Greenfields) showed significant change in music technology provision, there were signs that the other settings were hoping to build on this aspect of the project. Overall it seems that the project helped to maintain and in many cases, increase the quality of music provision in each of the participating settings which in turn should enhance the quality of musical experience for the children in the longer term.

21. As well as providing evidence about children's development, the reflective evaluation process was also effective in informing and developing adult practice. Although a new way of working for practitioners and the project team, both clearly embraced the opportunity to reflect on and refine their practice collectively and individually in accordance with the needs of the children and there is evidence of genuine and good quality reflective practice in this respect. Ultimately this resulted in improved and developed practice, a differentiated and appropriate experience for the children and enhanced learning and development outcomes for both children and adults. It also seems to have engendered a more committed and 'serious' response from the settings.
22. An action research theme provided a specific focus to the reflective process and centred on establishing understanding and mastery of music technology in Early Years practice. It seems that overall the project was clearly successful in increasing the understanding of the practitioners who learnt about the practical process of sound recording and manipulation and also how to use effectively this as part of children's learning. Through reflective practice they also observed children's participation in music technology and refined and develop practice in response to this. With regard to 'mastery', the training went some way to developing practitioner skills and confidence offering scope for continued development in some settings. Evidence of continued work at Greenfields is particularly encouraging and additional training for practitioners at Clifton should enable them to take the work forward. Unfortunately this seems less likely at Hyson Green because of staffing constraints. However, although practitioners responded well to the training opportunities, it seems there was scope for more active follow up and independent 'practice' back in the settings in order to retain and utilise the skills learnt in the longer term.
23. The unavailability of the new software resulted in less obvious progression for the Project Leader in understanding of Early Years music technology. However through the reflective process, he clearly gained increased understanding about children's interaction with and responses and this was able to influence his practice, particularly in being able to encourage children to explore and discuss the nature of their sounds.
24. Despite the encouraging outcomes of the action research, it is evident the existing software and equipment remains limited and the development of accessible, user friendly and age appropriate technology seems crucial to moving further forward with the music technology work in future.
25. Alongside music technology, the training and development opportunities for practitioners were clearly effective in developing their practice and increasing their skills and confidence in other areas, particularly instrument and story work. In addition, there is evidence of increased understanding of the value of music making as a key part of Early Years practice. Overall, there is scope for a considerable legacy and the signs that

practitioners will build on and continue to implement their new skills and experiences are encouraging in this respect, particularly at Greenfields where practitioners have been running structured music and music technology activities with other groups at the setting and are intending to provide opportunities for increased parental involvement. In addition, they were intending to share knowledge gained through the project with other practitioners at a PEEP training course which will extend the impact of the project even further.

26. As well as practitioners, the project was also successful in developing the experience, confidence and musical leadership of the project trainee in Early Years music practice. Evidence that she had been able to apply her new found skills with other groups was particularly encouraging. The reflective process again appears to have been a significant area of learning and also the instrument work. However, in view of less obvious development of music technology practice and also little take up of bespoke training opportunities, it appears the training structure was perhaps too informal for the needs of the trainee and that a more structured approach might have been beneficial.
27. Although not involved as volunteers as originally intended, parents actively participated in and enjoyed the project at both Hyson Green and Clifton. The decision to eventually withdraw them from sessions seemed appropriate overall and resulted in increased participation and independence amongst their children. There could be scope however to establish a system of feedback after sessions to keep parents informed. Overall there were encouraging signs that they embraced the project, recognised the benefits to their children and in some cases supported them to continue activities at home.

### **3.2 Final conclusions**

Overall Telling Tales has been a highly successful and innovative project. It has clearly achieved the overall aim of advancing the learning of young children and providing them with high quality experiences in music and music technology. It has also achieved all of the project outcomes and through the enlightened inclusion of an embedded reflective evaluation process has provided invaluable developmental experiences for all involved. The innovative design and concept of the project, the high quality and appropriate activities and approaches and the integration of the reflective process are entirely attributable to the refreshing and forward thinking approach and practice of the Project Leader. Alongside this it is also evident that he was an effective project manager and trainer and a skilled music leader who consistently demonstrated his ability to inspire, engage with and respond to the needs of all of the children involved. There is considerable potential for the project to achieve a significant legacy and for all those involved to build on the experiences gained. It is also very encouraging that despite the many challenges and learning experiences encountered along the way, as a result of the reflective learning process, there were very few significant unresolved issues – most have been addressed as the project progressed. However, in moving forward there are a few areas of potential development which could be considered. These are outlined in the following section.

### **3.3 Areas for further development**

In future projects it is suggested consideration is given to the following:

1. Finding the financial resources and partnership to develop more accessible, user friendly and age appropriate software and technology. In view of the limitations of the current

technology, this seems crucial to being able to extend and further develop the music technology work in future.

2. Further research and investigation into the use and benefits of instrumental play as a means of non verbal communication, particularly with EAL children and children with limited language.
3. Ensuring outcomes and linked indicators, particularly in music technology, are appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the children through reference to the EYFS goals. This has already been acknowledged and taken onboard by the Project Leader.
4. Including sufficient resources within project recruitment budgets for tasters and/or additional sessions to encourage involvement and support retainment of parents and children who are initially reluctant to participate due to the unfamiliar nature of the activity.
5. Including resources within the project management budget for additional evaluation/administrative support to reduce the workload of the Project Leader in this respect and ensure a more appropriate balance with the musical delivery.
6. In addition to encouraging independent 'practice' of newly acquired music technology skills, providing more structured and supported opportunities within sessions for practitioners to use and apply their knowledge.
7. Alongside this, finding a practical way to ensuring that those practitioners involved in observing children are also able to gain hands on experience and involvement during sessions.
8. Developing a more structured and formal training programme for trainees to ensure hands on experience is gained in music technology and training needs are identified and responded to. As part of this process, it is suggested that the specific experience and level of confidence of individual trainees is explored and taken into consideration.
9. Establish a system of feedback after sessions to keep parents informed of their children's responses and development. This is particularly appropriate where parents are involved initially but withdraw to encourage more independent participation of their children.

## 4. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### TELLING TALES

##### Musical Environment Rating Scale

*(based on a scale developed by Dr Susan Young, University of Exeter and used with her permission)*

Name of Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Accommodation \_\_\_\_\_

Age range and number of children \_\_\_\_\_

Number of staff \_\_\_\_\_

Number of staff with musical expertise \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1 Musical Instruments

None	4 or 5 small instruments – not in good condition (or lots of small 'one each' instruments)	Reasonable number of instruments in reasonable condition including some tuned and untuned	Good number of instruments, tuned and untuned, in good condition (and correct beaters/strikers available)	Generous number and range of instruments, including tuned, untuned, representing a variety of musical traditions and kept in good condition,
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#### 2 How the instruments are set out

None – so not set out	Not accessible to children and rarely brought out	Sometimes accessible to children	Set out to be accessible, but the arrangement never varies	Set out to be accessible and the set-ups are varied regularly
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### 3 Equipment for playing recorded music

No equipment for playing recorded music	Old cassette or CD player – poor quality sound  Used less than once a week	Reasonable quality cassette or CD cassette player  Sometimes used – about once a week	Good quality CD player, with larger or separate speakers that produce good quality sound  Used often (2/3 times per week)	Very good, CD player, good quality – in very accessible position, where children can use it too  In very frequent use
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### 4 Resources for listening (Cassettes, CDs)

No resources for listening	A few nursery rhyme cassettes – rarely played	Some cassettes/CDs (less than 10) predominantly nursery rhymes or children’s music  Sometimes used about once a week	Several CDs/cassettes – more than 10, representing different musical styles  Used often (2/3 times per week)	Large, varied selection CDs for listening to – including wide range of styles, pop, classical, ‘world’ etc.  In very frequent use
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### 5 Group song singing

No singing	Singing occasionally – perhaps once a week or less	Singing once or twice a week	Singing most days for a short period of time (e.g. 5 minutes) with some music activities related to the songs (mostly actions)	Singing every day (10 minutes or more, or more than once a day) with varied music activities related to the songs
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### 6 Who takes group song singing?

No one takes song singing	One member of staff always takes song-singing	Most members of staff sing and lead song-singing – but not all.	All staff lead songs – but some less confident than others and	All staff equally confident, song singing is shared and all can sing
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			know fewer songs	several songs
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### 7 Songs as part of everyday

No song singing as part of everyday activity	Children are rarely supported in singing as part of everyday activity	Occasional 'everyday' singing – one or two regular songs	'Everyday' singing is a regular part of practice – some familiar songs for routines (e.g. tidying up, changing - )	Everyday singing is embedded in practice – known and made-up songs for all kinds of activities.
----------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### 8 Song repertoire

No song singing	Up to four songs, always the same – familiar nursery rhymes	Several songs – between five and ten. Never changing.	A good repertoire of songs – about 10 or more. Quite varied.	A very wide repertoire of songs, including songs from other cultures, which is continually being added to
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### 9 Adding actions and activities to the songs

No song singing	Some simple actions to the songs – mostly simple finger movements	Several different actions and activities to go with songs.	A good repertoire of activities to go with songs – involving actions and instruments.	A wide repertoire of activities to go with songs involving movements, dramatisations, instruments and other props
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### 10 Dance/movement to music (including dance to songs, or traditional children's circle games) – this may relate to whether space is available.

No dance/movement to music No space	Occasional dance/movement to music - less than once a week	Dance/movement to music once or twice a week	Dance/move to music frequently with some variety of music,	Dance to music or songs every day – special provision
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available			activities etc.	made for dancing, with equipment
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### 11 Music technology (use of computers and software)

No computer	A computer, but no music activity software	Software on the computer for music, but never or rarely used	One or more computers with software for music, used occasionally	One or more than one computers with software for music, used regularly
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### 12 Who supervises the music technology?

No staff involvement	Staff members switch on the computer and then leave children alone.	Staff members switch on the computer and help children on request.	Staff members remain with children to help them on request.	Staff members play an active and present part in the children's interactions with the computer.
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### 13 Outdoor musical opportunities

No outdoor musical instruments	Instruments are set up out-of-doors rarely	Quite often instruments are put out of doors	Outdoor musical play with instruments is always provided for (may include an outdoor installation – but is it used and is it in good condition?)	Interesting, outdoor musical installation, used frequently and other outdoor music play opportunities
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### 14 Parental involvement in music (this will depend on the type of setting and may not be entirely relevant)

No parental involvement	Parents know about music from 'profiles' or displays but	Occasional parental involvement – mostly special	Frequent parental involvement in	Parents involved in musical activity on every
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	don't join in the music	events	music	occasion
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**General Information**

(note in this section any other information which explains or expands on the rating in any of the categories above)

## Appendix 2

### TRACKED CHILDREN DETAILS

#### Clifton Child A

Gender	Male
Date of birth and age at start	27.11.07 (2 years 9 months)
Ethnicity	White British

#### Clifton Child B

Gender	Female
Date of birth and age at start	17.1.07 (3 years 10 months)
Ethnicity	Polish (EAL)

#### Greenfields Child C

Gender	Female
Date of birth and age at start	25.3.07 (2 years 6 months)
Ethnicity	Indian/Hindu (EAL)

#### Greenfields Child D

Gender	Female
Date of birth and age at start	13.10.06 (3 years 11 months)
Ethnicity	White British

#### Hyson Green Child E

Gender	Female
Date of Birth and age at start	30.8.08 (2 years 8 months)
Ethnicity	Indonesian (EAL)

#### Hyson Green Child F

Gender	Female
Date of birth and age at start	1.4.09 (2 years 1 month)
Ethnicity	Pakistani (EAL)

## Appendix 3

### TELLING TALES - CHILD DEVELOPMENT RATING SCALE FORM (please photocopy as necessary)

Setting  
Date

Name of person completing form  
Child (letter and initials)

Please complete the rating scale below by circling the scale point you feel best applies to each indicator:

- Level 1 No progress towards achieving the indicator  
 Level 2 Minimal progress towards achieving the indicator  
 Level 3 Some progress towards achieving the indicator  
 Level 4 Substantial progress towards achieving the indicator  
 Level 5 Indicator achieved fully

Music technology skills	Scale Rating
Uses the mouse for fine movements	1 2 3 4 5
Navigates through the software menus unassisted	1 2 3 4 5
Is able to tell if a sound is too loud when recorded	1 2 3 4 5
Recognises the relationship between pitch on the virtual keyboard and the change in the sampled sound	1 2 3 4 5
Can describe the quality of a sampled and edited sound ranging from simple descriptions to more colourful vocabulary	1 2 3 4 5
Demonstrates an understanding of what effects do to a sound by offering descriptions of what they want to happen to the sound and knowing which edit process to use to create that	1 2 3 4 5
To be able to show others in the setting how the software works (peer learning)	1 2 3 4 5
<b>Musical skills (singing)</b>	
Can sing in tune	1 2 3 4 5
Can sing together in time	1 2 3 4 5
Can add actions whilst continuing to sing	1 2 3 4 5
Can sing simple songs from memory	1 2 3 4 5
Sings with intent (effortful, engaged, confident singing)	1 2 3 4 5
<b>Musical skills (playing instruments)</b>	
Can manipulate and use a range of instruments in different ways	1 2 3 4 5
Can improvise on instrument	1 2 3 4 5
Can start and stop with a group	1 2 3 4 5
Can play in time with a group	1 2 3 4 5
Can play at different volumes (loud and soft) and understands the difference	1 2 3 4 5
Can play at different speeds (slow and fast) and understands the difference	1 2 3 4 5

Plays with intent (effortful, engaged, confident playing)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Language and communication</b>					
Enjoys listening to and using spoken/written language	1	2	3	4	5
Can sustain attentive listening and responds to what has heard with comments, questions or actions	1	2	3	4	5
Listens with enjoyment and responds to stories, rhymes, songs and music.	1	2	3	4	5
Make up their own stories, rhymes and songs	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary extended and using new words and sounds	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Personal and social development</b>					
Is interested, excited and motivated to learn	1	2	3	4	5
Participates independently in activities with confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Is confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group	1	2	3	4	5
Can maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
Has a good relationship with adults and peers	1	2	3	4	5
Can work as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing fairly	1	2	3	4	5

The form should be completed by the **same person** each time. Please complete one form for each child at the 3 specified points in the project (before session 1, between sessions ... and ... and after the final session) Please return each form after completion to the Project Leader or evaluator. If you would like to comment further on any of the above areas please do so overleaf or on a separate sheet