



# Open School Orchestras - 2015



National Foundation for  
Youth Music



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## Introduction

In 2013 **OpenUp Music** contacted 34 schools in the South West of England to ask them if they had a school orchestra. Just over 50% of the mainstream schools we spoke to said that they had one - not a single special school did. In 2014, the **Association of British Orchestras** "Youth Ensemble Survey Report" identified 1,240 music ensembles in the UK, including 114 youth ensembles - there is no mention of any provision for disabled children/young people or those with special education needs.

The **Open School Orchestra** project is an ongoing initiative by OpenUp Music to establish and maintain school orchestras for young disabled musicians. During 2013/14 we established the UK's first three Open School Orchestras within special education centres in Bath, Bristol and Cheltenham. Throughout 2014/15, with support from the **National Foundation for Youth Music** and **Rayne Foundation**, OpenUp Music has helped maintain those Open School Orchestras and also established three new orchestras within special schools in Bristol, Thornbury and Weston-Super-Mare.

Our three legacy orchestras were provided with resources based upon Monteverdi's 'Pur Ti Miro' - resources that were developed during the 2013/14 pilot project. These resources combine accessible, affordable and expressive musical instrument prototypes with preset notation and instrumentation designed to allow teachers within these settings to take the work forward with as little input from OpenUp Music as possible.

By contrast, our three new orchestras received a high degree of input and support through weekly music-making sessions led by two members of staff from OpenUp Music. Orchestra members were introduced to a range of cutting edge assistive music technology as well as more traditional instrumentation, identifying combinations that afforded musicians the highest degree of agency and control. New musical instruments were even created to enable those young musicians who would ordinarily have been excluded from this type of experience to take part, and in some cases take centre stage.

Our three new orchestras were each introduced to a piece of musical repertoire to rework over the course of the year - Beethoven's 7th Symphony, Thomas Tallis' Spem in Alium and Pachelbel's Canon. With the help of our highly skilled practitioners, orchestra members were supported in gaining mastery over their instruments and prepared for performances at gradually more ambitious concerts, culminating in a final public performance at the **Fast Forward Music Festival** - an event that was itself inspired by our 2013/14 Open School Orchestra performances at Bristol Colston Hall.

The project drew upon the experience and expertise of a broad range of practitioners including music leaders, academics, computer coders, music technologists and teachers. A professional musician from our partner organisation, the internationally renowned **British Paraorchestra**, also acted as a musical mentor, offering young participants a truly memorable experience.

The project was made possible by the enthusiasm and hard work of our project team:

Musical Director:	Doug Bott
Managing / Technical Director:	Barry Farrimond
Project Mentor:	Charlotte White

Special thanks go out to Liz Batt, Bridgette Brooks, Phil Castang, Ben Edwards, Lucy Galloway, Ian Holmes (UWE), Dr Liz Lane (UWE), Sandra Neal, Siggie Patchitt, Beki Le Petit, Caryn Ritchie and Paul Tarling for their tireless support and enthusiasm. Thanks also to all of the staff at Baytree School, Briarwood School, Bristol Plays Music, Claremont School, Colston Hall, the National Star College, New Siblands School, Threeways School and UWE.

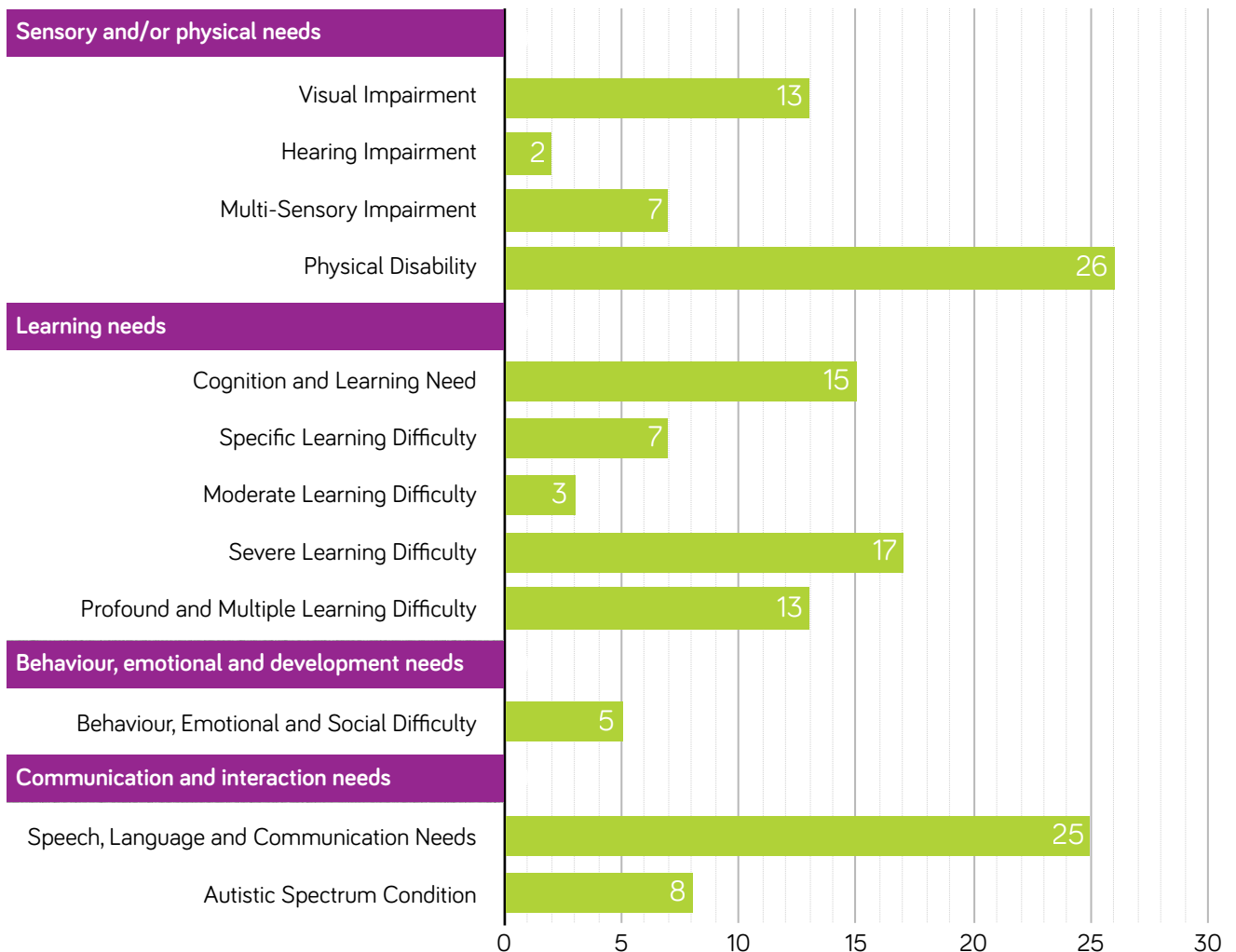
Finally we would like to express our immense gratitude to our funders The National Foundation for Youth Music and The Rayne Foundation - without their generous support this groundbreaking work simply would not have been possible.

# Demographics

This year's three new Open School Orchestras involved 40 young musicians aged between 4-18 years. Of these, 26 were male and 14 female representing a 65% - 35% split. "Children with special educational needs: an analysis 2013" by the Department of Education identifies that 73% of pupils with a SEN statement are male and 27% are female so this is roughly reflective of populations within SEN schools.

92.5% of those joining our three new Open School Orchestras were of White British ethnicity with just three participants having other ethnic backgrounds, namely Black African, Indian and Pakistani. 'Children with special educational needs: an analysis 2013' identifies that around 76% of pupils with a SEN statement are White British with the remaining 24% being of minority ethnic backgrounds.

The ways in which our orchestra members are impaired and the barriers to participation they face are extremely broad. We felt that these barriers could be roughly represented within four key areas, namely sensory and/or physical needs; learning disabilities; behaviour, emotional and development needs; and communication and interaction needs. It should be noted that none of these categories, and the various sub categories they contain, are mutually exclusive i.e people can and do experience numerous barriers to participation.



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## Data Collection Methods

OpenUp Music considers evaluation to be a core component of our work. We believe that effective evaluation and self reflection helps us assess how well we are doing and makes us more effective in our practices.

We gathered evidence from a wide range of sources within and beyond the project through a variety of data collection methods. Quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires, audience attendance at performances and through the **Sounds of Intent** framework. Qualitative data was gathered via video testimony, interview, reflective diary, focus groups, online comment and also through the Sounds of Intent framework.

The project adopted an outcomes based approach to project evaluation, ultimately working towards the fulfilment of five predefined outcomes:

**Outcome 1 - Improving the quality and standards of music delivery**

**Outcome 2 - Embedding learning and effective practice**

**Outcome 3 - Developing musical skills**

**Outcome 4 - Promoting musical agency**

**Outcome 5 - Challenging expectations raising aspirations**

To demonstrate progress towards these outcomes we have identified a range of outcome indicators. These indicators defined the types of evidence we collected to measure our progress and have also informed the structure of this document.





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## Improving the quality and standards of music delivery

“ The outcome is that they are producing music of an amazing standard together, so the judgement from that must be that the quality and standards must be very high.

Andrew Buckton - Head Teacher - New Siblands School

The Open School Orchestra project set out provide better access to high quality and appropriate music-making opportunities for profoundly disabled children and young people, with more opportunity to explore their musical talent and to progress. In total, we spent 93 days delivering high quality music making workshops to our three new Open School Orchestras, 9 of which were spent in the company of a musical mentor from the British Paraorchestra.

In establishing our three new orchestras, 40 children and young people were introduced to a range of musical instrumentation. For those disabled by more conventional musical instruments we introduced, and even developed, accessible musical instruments that enabled them to take an independent and active role within their orchestra. Each orchestra was introduced to a separate piece of musical repertoire. This was reworked over the course of the year to produce a final piece that captured the musicality of participants and celebrated their achievements within a prominent public performance.

School staff supporting our three legacy orchestras were provided with a range of resources combining accessible, affordable and expressive musical instrument prototypes with preset notation and instrumentation designed to allow teachers within these settings to take the work forward with as little input from OpenUp Music as possible. In total these practitioners were provided with 12 training sessions over the course of the year, enabling them to improve the quality and standards of their own musical delivery.

After our final performances at the Fast Forward Music Festival, we asked teachers if the Open School Orchestra project had improved the quality and standards of musical delivery within their school - everyone we asked told us that it had. Interviews and reflective practice sessions with teachers provided us with more information, helping us understand the ways in which the project had done this.

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### An increase in the quality and standards of music delivery for young disabled musicians.

For some, the increase in quality and standards of musical delivery was absolute:

“ Those young people wouldn't have had the opportunity at all had you not done the project. They simply wouldn't have had a music curriculum.

Andrew Buckton - Head Teacher - New Siblands School

Others felt that it was our accessible music technology that had improved musical delivery by enabling young disabled musicians to play independently, progress musically and showcase their achievements in ways that they had never been able to before:

“ It was off the scale, it exceeds anything that our young people, and particularly that group of children, ever have the opportunity to achieve...the technology is certainly raising opportunities for pupils to show us what they can do.

Fiona Richings - Head Teacher - Baytree School

Elements of our musical delivery inspired school staff and influenced the ways in which they deliver music themselves:

“ When you used call and response, I thought it was a really brilliant way of working. It might be quite normal for you, but I've not done that and I've not seen others do it in a school context before. It's something I can try.

Sandra Neal - Teacher - Briarwood School

“ Its amazing what you can do, I wouldn't have thought of these things. This has shown me how I can change the way I work and improve it.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

And within our three legacy orchestras, teachers told us that the training, support and resources provided by OpenUp Music had given them the skills and confidence they need to continue providing a school orchestra more independently:

“ The basic resources have been invaluable...training has supported us in using the accessible programs confidently, so I can now run the sessions fairly independently

Steve Newton - Teacher - Claremont School

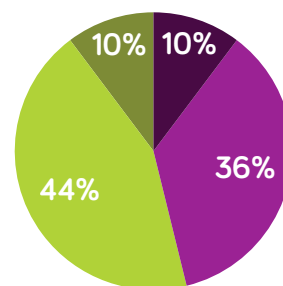
“ We feel very much more able to manage this project in house. Expectations have been raised across the board as have our pupils aspirations.

Ben Edwards - Deputy Head - Threeways School

## Disabled musicians playing musical instruments independently in a school orchestra.

None of the 40 children and young people in our three new orchestras had ever played as part of a large ensemble before and only 2 had performed music in front of people, outside of school. At the start of the project, teachers told us that only 16 of these children and young people could play a musical instrument independently (i.e without any assistance).

At the start of the project we asked teachers to grade the degree of control that each child or young person had over a musical instrument on a 4 point Likert scale, the results of which are presented here in a pie-chart. By the end of the project all musicians were playing in a school orchestra and all of them had independent control over an expressive musical instrument.



“ He loves it, for him to be able to do something independently is fantastic for his confidence.

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

- No degree of control
- Some degree of control
- Good degree of control
- High degree of control

## Case Study - Josh

One young musician who was deemed to have no degree of control over a musical instrument at the start of the project was Josh. Josh has very limited mobility but is able to move his eyebrows independently. Technical Director Barry Farrimond spent several weeks working with Josh to develop a new musical instrument that he could play by moving his eyebrows.

“ Part of the challenge was to create a musical instrument that was expressive. We could have used a fairly simple system to allow Josh to trigger sounds with an on/off eye switch, but his movement is expressive and dynamic, his sound needed to be as well.

Barry Farrimond - Technical Director - OpenUp Music



In the end Barry developed a computer programme to track two reflective dots on Josh's face, one placed on his cheek and one on his eyebrow. As Josh raised his eyebrow an infrared camera measured the distance between the two points and turned his facial gestures into musical ones. Josh used the height of his eyebrow to vary the loudness and timbre of his sound and also to add more notes to the chord he was playing. Thanks to the Open School Orchestra project, Josh was given full control over an expressive, multitimbral musical instrument that he could play as part of a school orchestra.

“ It's given him something he's not had before. With everything else he has no control or choice, because he can't move anything. But he can move [his eyebrows] and as a parent I'm really thankful that you've done that for Josh.

Jane - Josh's mum

A short film showing Josh playing his musical instrument during early rehearsals can be seen [here](#).





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## Embedding learning and effective practice.

This year's project had two distinct strands - establishing new Open School Orchestras and supporting the continuation of those established during 2013/14. Whilst the overarching aim was the same - opening up school orchestras to young disabled musicians - the way in which the work was delivered and the ways in which learning and effective practice were embedded were different.

In creating the three new Open School Orchestras, OpenUp Music pursued a model of delivery that is ultimately unsustainable in regard to the national propagation of the work at a school level. This strand was incredibly ambitious combining the reworking of complex musical repertoire with the development and employment of cutting edge assistive music technology through a body of work that lead towards three high profile public performances at the Fast-Forward Music Festival. We believe that this model is better suited to the formation of a regional or national youth orchestra.

Consequently the emphasis of this strand in regard to learning and effective practice was 1) to embed the learning and effective practice within OpenUp Music to enable us to successfully launch the South-West Open Youth Orchestra (the UK's first disabled-led regional youth orchestra) in September 2015 and 2) to generate new ideas and materials that can be distilled down into resources that **are** appropriate for broader national dissemination at a school level.

The orchestra continuation strand focussed on evaluating a more sustainable model of delivery suitable for broader dissemination at a school level. Using the Monteverdi 'Pur Ti Miro' resources created during last year's pilot project, teachers within these settings were able to take the work forward with training and support from OpenUp Music practitioners. Most of the outcome indicators below refer to the ways in which we have embedded learning and effective practice within the schools taking part in this particular strand of the project.

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### Number of school staff receiving training in music leading and accessible musical instruments.

“ **Continued communication and regular contact with Doug from OpenUp Music has insured a continuation of approach at NSC and has supported further training using technology. This has been implemented straightaway and giving the teacher more experience to experiment and work with orchestra members independently.**

Paul Tarling - Area Coordinator Creative and Performing Arts - Star College

In total 4 members of staff from the three legacy school orchestras received training from OpenUp Music. We asked those practitioners to rate the training they had received via a 5 point rating scale where 1=Not applicable, 2= Inadequate, 3=Satisfactory, 4=Good, 5=Outstanding. Half rated our training as Good and the remaining half told us that it was Outstanding.

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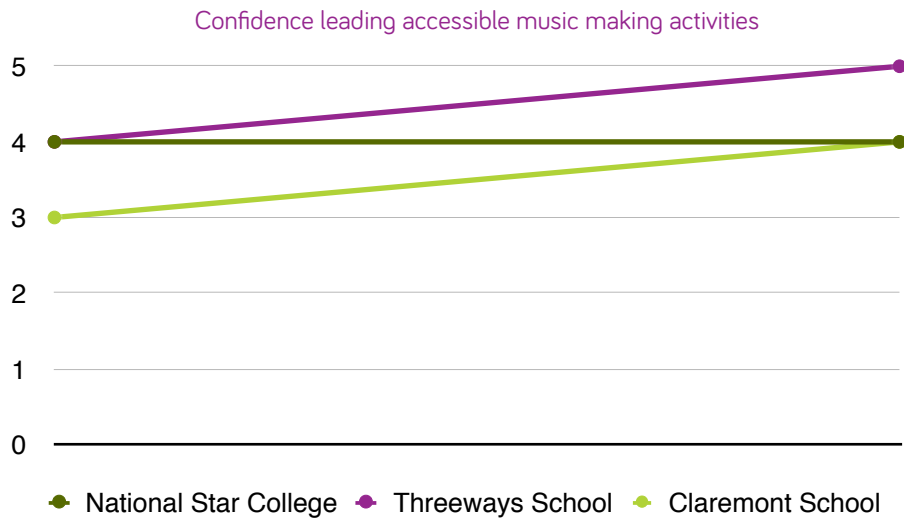
### School staff report an increase in their confidence leading music and using accessible musical instruments.

“ **The basic resources have been invaluable in creating an orchestra to play an improvised version of a more formal music piece. Training has supported us in using the accessible programmes confidently, so I can now run the sessions fairly independently**

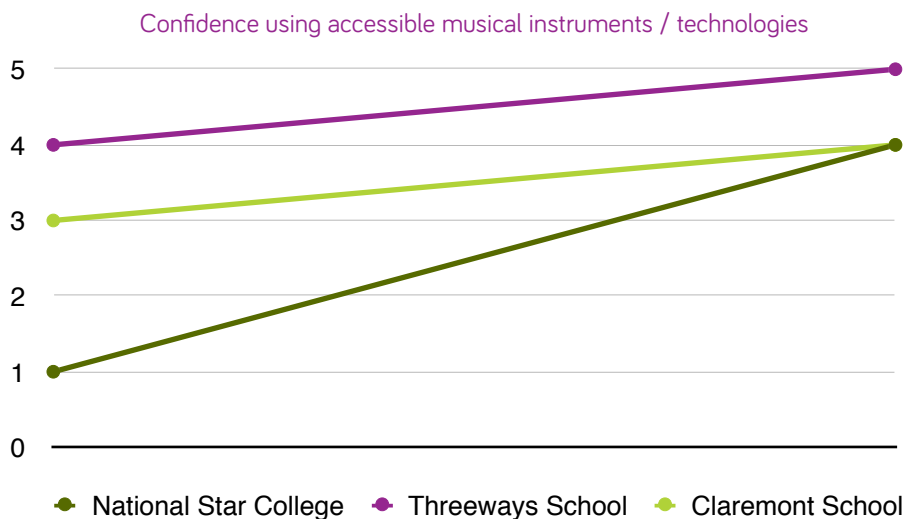
Steve Newton - Teacher - Claremont School

At the end of last year's Open School Orchestra pilot project, we asked school staff how confident they were leading music making activities with children and young people with SEN/D via a 5 point rating scale where 1=not confident, 2= not very confident, 3=moderately confident, 4=fairly confident and 5=very confident. We asked those same practitioners how confident they felt at the end of this year and were pleased see that all practitioners were now feeling either fairly confident or very confident. This demonstrates an increase in confidence for staff at both Threeways School and Claremont School with Star College staff remaining fairly confident.





Last year we also asked staff within these three settings how confident they were using accessible musical instruments / technologies. They rated their confidence levels using the same 5 point scale, 1=not confident, 2=not very confident, 3=moderately confident, 4=fairly confident and 5=very confident. At the end of this year's project we asked staff to tell us how confident they felt now, and were pleased to see that staff from all settings are now feeling more confident using accessible musical instruments / technology with the practitioner from National Star College showing a particularly pronounced degree of increased confidence!



## Number of teachers introduced to the Sounds of Intent.

The 'Sounds of Intent' research project was set up in 2002 by the Institute of Education, Roehampton University, and the Royal National Institute of the Blind. The aim of the Sounds of Intent is to investigate and promote the musical development of children/young people who experience learning difficulties. The framework is structured around six levels of musical development, ranging from no awareness of sound (level 1) to mature musical engagement (level 6). It plots musical development across these six levels within three main headings: reactive, proactive and interactive.

The Sounds of Intent had already been introduced to the members of school staff supporting the three orchestras established during the 2013/14 pilot. Of the three members of staff supporting our three new school orchestras, one had already been introduced to the Sounds of Intent as part of a training initiative organised by OpenUp Music back in 2013. The project introduced the Sounds of Intent Framework to the two remaining members of staff and involved them in the evaluations that were made throughout the project.



OpenUpMusic



## Developing Musical Skills:

“ It is...vital to ensure that music education takes particular account of children with special needs, who have disabilities or who are vulnerable in other ways. Such children may find it harder to access music education but they have as much as other children to gain from it.

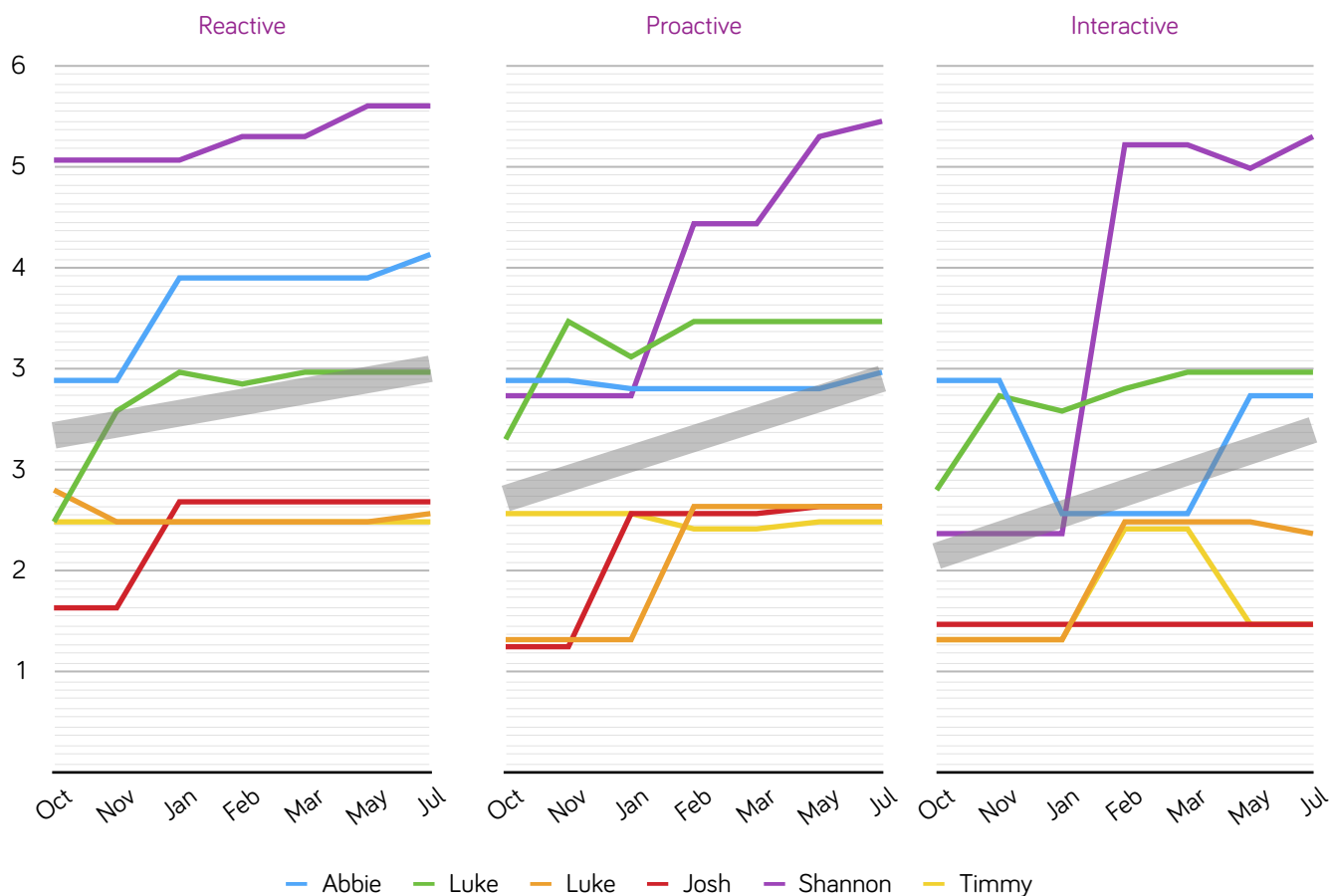
Lord Adonis (speech given as Schools Minister to the Federation of Music Services, 2008)

We are keen to demonstrate the difference that our Open School Orchestras make to the musical skills of the young musicians we work with. To this end we gathered a range of data to demonstrate the impact that the project has had in this regard.

### Participants show an increase in musical skills taken in line with the Sounds of Intent framework.

We originally aimed to evaluate the musical progression of each participating child / young person via the Sounds of Intent framework. Given the depth of evaluation that the framework requires and the significant time demands of the project, it quickly became apparent that this was unworkable. After consulting with teaching staff we decided to choose two musicians from each orchestra to assess, a total of six across the project. The participants were carefully chosen to reflect the range of children and young people taking part in the project.

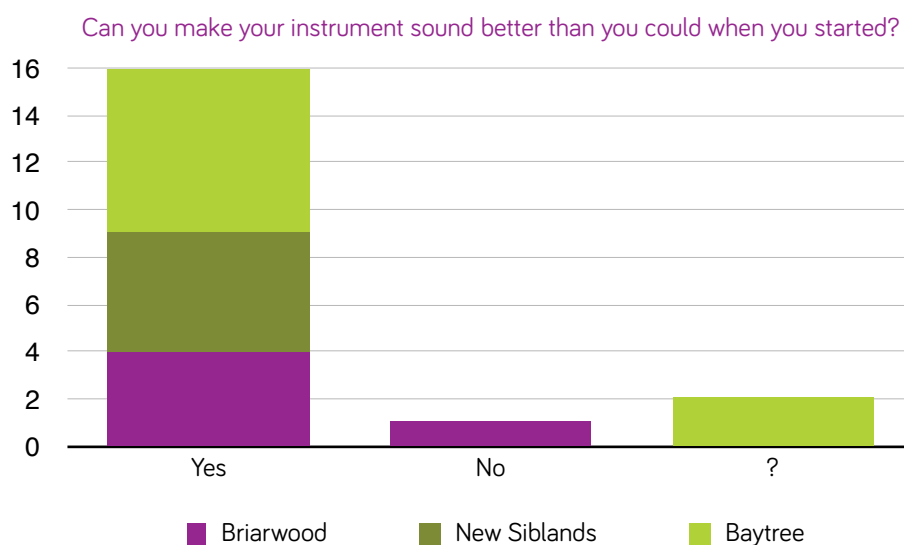
We have aggregated the results of our six case study musicians showing their progress within the Reactive, Proactive and Interactive areas of the Sounds of Intent framework across the life of the project. The thick grey line on each chart depicts the aggregated trend for all participants, which can be seen to have increased significantly across all three areas:



## Participants evidence an increase in musical skill through an evolving line of dichotomous questions.

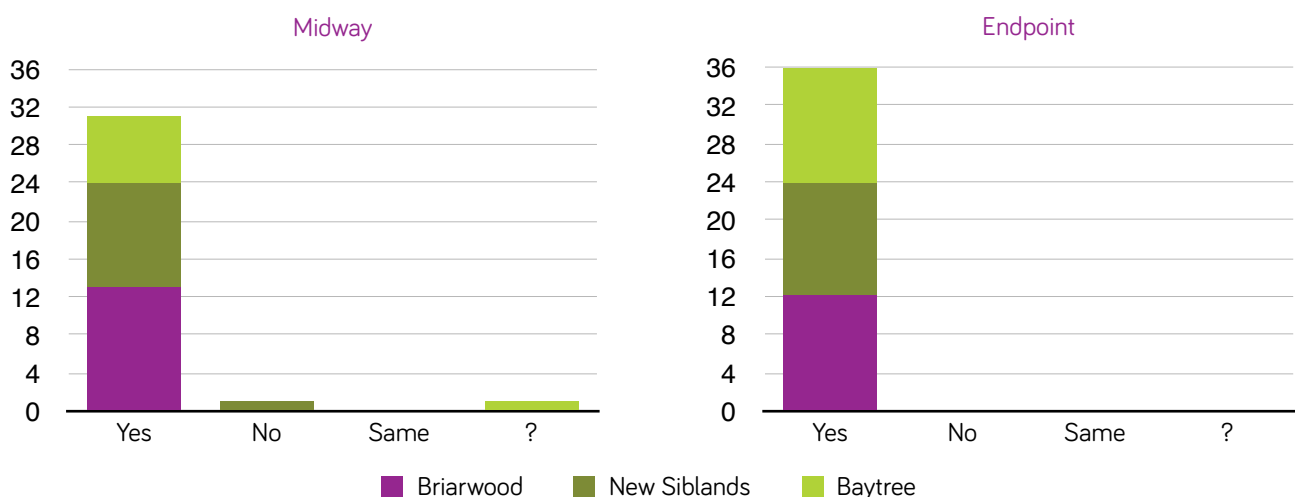
Throughout the project participants were asked an evolving series of “yes/no/don’t know” questions. These questions were developed to measure a range of outcomes including changes in aspiration, agency, team working, wellbeing and musical skill. They take into account the fact that many of the children and young people in the orchestras might not be able to complete questionnaires or use other tools frequently used for gathering evaluative data from children and young people; that some children and young people will respond best to dichotomous questions; and that there will be limited time to enable all children and young people to answer all questions. For the most part around half of our musicians were able to answer these questions.

At about halfway through the project we asked participants **“Can you make your instrument sound better than you could when you started?”** The vast majority of children and young people told us that they felt that they could, and by extension that they felt their musical skill had increased.



## School staff evidence an increase in participants’ musical skills.

Along with our Sounds of Intent evaluations and the questions “yes/no/don’t know” asked of the children and young people, we also asked staff at all three new school orchestras if they felt participants had **“shown improvement in regard to their musicianship since starting with the orchestra?”** At the halfway point evaluation, teachers felt that the vast majority of participants had increased their musical skill, by the end of the project teachers were telling us that everyone had.



During interviews and reflective practice session, teachers also provided us with more detail regarding the ways in which individual orchestra members had increased their musical skills. Below are a few of the comments recorded during these sessions:

“ Patrick is learning skills we didn't think he could manage, that can be transferred into how we teach.

Bridgette Brooks - Teacher - New Siblands School

“ The degree of control she has over her instrument has improved amazingly from the start.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

“ When Elizabeth started to join in with others it was amazing, prior to that we hadn't felt that she was. And then there was a moment where we were all playing and Elizabeth was clearly joining in with everybody, she wasn't doing it by herself anymore.

Sandra Neal - Teacher - Briarwood School

“ Abbie...is doing really, really well. They're really pleased with what she has been doing in here, she's getting an awful lot from it.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

“ They have mastered their instruments, and are showing what they can do “We know our instruments and here we are!” They have all shown mastery over their instruments today.

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

“ He comes into assemblies and leads any singing we have on his guitar - that's something he didn't do before the Orchestra, now he's strumming with a purpose.

Bridgette Brooks - Teacher - New Siblands School

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## Case Study - Shannon

In contrast to Josh where the key aim was affording basic physical agency and control, Shannon is an energetic young girl on the autistic spectrum for whom the principal development challenges were focus and engagement. Her initial Sounds of Intent baseline evaluation said:

“Involvement in early sessions characterised by an anxiety around sound (wears ear defenders) and a tendency to want to organise her fellow pupils and create distractions around her own involvement.”

Despite this starting point Shannon made significant progress over the year. Musical Director Doug Bott worked closely with her which eventually enabled her to take a key role in the final performance:



“ It was clear that Shannon just needed to be stretched and pushed hard to realise her potential and to deny any opportunities for her to disrupt rehearsals. She quickly learned to play the Pachelbel Ground Bass on the keyboard and so I casually suggested she add the first canon in the right hand as well which, to everyone's surprise, she was able to do.

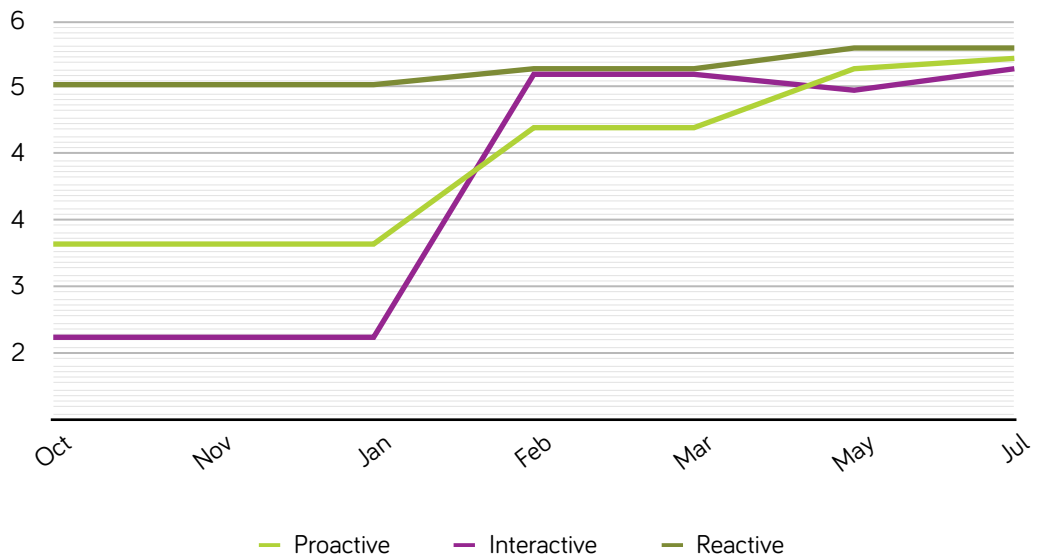
Doug Bott - Musical Director - OpenUp Music

On her own initiative Shannon also performed an impromptu a-cappella song for the audience at the end of the final performance. The head teacher found this particularly noteworthy, because Shannon brought the song to a natural close herself, rather than having to be coerced into finishing, as would normally be the case:

“ You know that slightly risky end, when you let her hold the mic? It could have easily gone either way because she could have carried on for three hours. She's demonstrated an incredible awareness of other people, that you could say is not ordinarily possible for someone with her needs... she's grasped something about connecting with other people that she hasn't previously done. I'd say that was exceptional.

Andrew Buckton - Head Teacher - New Siblands School

Shannon's Sounds of Intent Assessment for the year evidences her progress in all three domains of which her 'Interactive' musical development is hugely significant given the barriers that her autism presents to interacting musically and constructively with others.







## Promoting Musical Agency

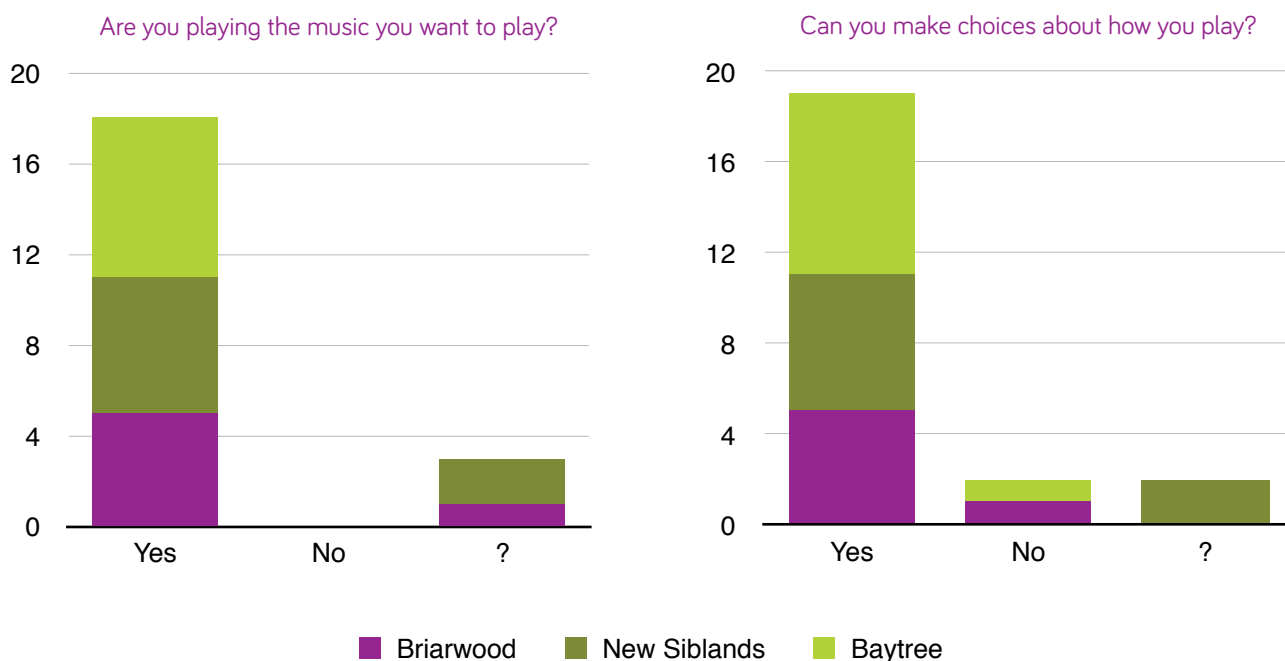
“ You get told so often over the years what they can't do, this proves what they can.

Alfie's mum

The Open School Orchestra project set out to reduced exclusion from activities for disabled children and young people, with increased opportunities to relate to peers and to connect and contribute to wider society through musical performances. At the beginning of the project we asked teachers how many of the orchestra members received hand over hand assistance with a musical instrument. In total 12 of the 40 children and young people taking part in the project received this type of support. As has already been mentioned, by the end of the Open School Orchestra project all of the young musicians taking part had a musical instrument that they could play independently. We wanted the young musicians taking part in the project to have control not only over their instrument, but also over what they were playing and how they were playing it.

### Participants report that they are enabled to make choices about what and how they play.

Some of the “yes/no/don't know” questions asked to orchestra members were designed to let us know if they felt able to make choices about what and how they played. Two questions, asked at different stages within the project both show that our musicians felt able to make those choices.



### Observations by staff of how musical provision has developed from the creative and musical identities of participants.

“ They have their own individual, they put their own stamp on it, then improve and come back to it, revisit it...that's different to how we would be able to do it in class.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

As has been seen, conventional musical instruments disable many of the young musicians we work with and the development of musical instruments that could be played independently was one of the ways that musical provision grew from the identities of participants. For one musician, Alfie, the personalisation of an accessible musical instrument was taken to a new level through the adaptation of a personal treasure that he takes everywhere with him, his “flappy”. Alfie's flappy is a bright colourful piece of fabric that he enjoys waving through the air to create a range of patterns and visual motifs. Previous attempts to encourage Alfie to use a musical instrument had failed to gain his enthusiasm until OpenUp

Music staff embedded a triple axis accelerometer into his flappy to capture his movements and turn them into expressive musical sounds:

“ Well there was a wow moment last week with Alfie, he knew his flappy was making music, and where it was coming from. He was very motivated - if he's bored he won't do anything, he'll just sit there.

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

The process of developing musical instruments from the creative and musical identities of participants was not limited to finding a way for each musician to control an instrument. Throughout the project OpenUp Music staff also worked with participants to make sure that they were controlling an instrument **sound** that was right for them.

“ With Isaac, how many different sounds have we tried with him? And you've hit on several he likes, when you want him to stop he won't stop! He's just so into it! It's changing things to respond to their choices and what motivates them.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

“ I like the Piano, doing the echo microphone

Shannon - Open School Orchestra member

“ I like the drum

Patrick - Open School Orchestra member

“ The MPD, changing music on it. I want to play Pachelbel's Canon

Luke - Open School Orchestra member

“ Bells are my favourite. It's good, I choose which bells to play

Jess - Open School Orchestra member

Beyond the instrument, the way in which each piece of music was devised also grew from the creative and musical identities of participants. For many, conventional ideas of strict, regimented meter and a focus on rhythmic virtuosity can create significant barriers to meaningful participation. The idea of “playing in time” and playing notes “in the correct order” is often treated as a prerequisite for orchestral music, something that can disable many musicians. For members of the Briarwood School Orchestra these ideas would have proved particularly disabling. To ensure that the music created by this orchestra was entirely owned by its musicians we adopted a musical method that could enable the musical identity of those musicians to take centre stage - Aleatoric music

“ Aleatoric music, also called chance music, (aleatory from Latin *alea*, “dice”), 20th-century music in which chance or indeterminate elements are left for the performer to realise.

<http://www.britannica.com>

In realising their rendition of Thomas Tallis' 'Spem in Alium', large structural elements were predefined. For example the notes being played by the musicians moved around a particular harmonic centre and the orchestra worked to build the intensity of the music through a 4 minute crescendo - however the order, duration and timing of each note was dictated by the orchestra members through their interpretation of a conductor's visual cues.

“ You guys give them lots of involvement, you're literally setting it up for them to go, and you sort of melt into the background which is great! And it all comes from them. That really helps. It's individual but all together.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

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School staff report an increase in participants' involvement in music making.

“ I want music inside my body all times. Not sometimes.

Dan - Open School Orchestra member

We have already discussed some of the ways in which we have increased the involvement of participants in music making. This is evidenced by all musicians playing a musical instrument independently, opportunities to play in a large ensemble and through a high profile public performance to celebrate and showcase their achievements. School staff commented on these points during interviews and reflective practice sessions, further illustrating the ways in which the project has increased participants' involvement in music making.



School staff told us that providing the technology necessary to enable these young musicians to perform independently was something that had a huge impact on the increased involvement of participants in music making:

“ Without all your technology our children would not be able to perform and have this type of experience, it relies on that sophisticated technology. That could not of happened for our children otherwise.

Fiona Richings - Head Teacher - Baytree School

“ Elizabeth was really getting into this, and there was that big grin that lit up her face! This time she was doing it by herself with out support, her grin showed an awareness and sense of achievement.

Sandra Neal - Teacher - Briarwood School

As the project progressed, many of the young people who faced more pronounced barriers to participation developed an increased awareness of music and the ensemble, becoming involved in ways that school staff had never witnessed before:

“ There was that first time you played the Tallis music, and he was listening beautifully and then he began to join in the vocals and he sang! I thought that that was quite extraordinary, I've never seen him do something like that before.

Sandra Neal - Teacher - Briarwood School

“ Just being in this environment, with pupils that he hasn't spent a lot of time with. He wouldn't have done this before, he would't have coped.

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

The final performances at the Fast Forward Music Festival was an opportunity for the orchestra members to show the world what they could do. As has already been said, only 2 of the 40 children and young people taking part in the project had ever been involved in any musical performance in front of the general public before:

“ I was stood next to Abbie's mum and they couldn't believe it, they were so excited and proud. Because her older sister goes off and does gymnastics, but for Abbie there's not an awful lot of things where she can be the star and the focus and everyone looking at what she does. I think as a family that really meant a lot.

Fiona Richings - Head Teacher - Baytree School

“ It's amazing the thought of him going to the Colston Hall, this is a child you wouldn't have taken out of the building at one time.

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

“ Have you made music in front of a lot of people before? **Yes. In my dreams.**

Connor - Open School Orchestra member

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## Case Study - Marie

Marie faces a range of additional barriers to participation. She finds it difficult to use her hands to hold or manipulate a musical instrument, and has breathing irregularities that make blowing very challenging. She is able to move her head independently so the OpenUp Music team introduced her to an accessible musical instrument prototype developed during our 2013/14 pilot project.

The instrument prototype tracked Marie's head movements - looking left and right enabled her to navigate pitch, while looking up and down controlled the dynamics and timbre of the instrument. This offered her unprecedented control and with her new found independence Marie's musicianship blossomed. At the beginning of the project she would often become incredibly tired, often falling to sleep or "zoning out". By the end of the project she was playing independently for sustained periods of time with a much greater degree of control over her instrument:





“ The degree of control she has over her instrument has improved amazingly from the start. She’s completely wrapped up in it, which is great...she’s not zoning out she wears herself out! Stamina wise she’s more able to hold her head up now and knows how to play her instrument. She’s always very happy, she loves to see what’s going on, she loves being part of this team of people, she thrives on it.

Caryn Ritchie - Teacher - Baytree School

The Open School Orchestra project has raised Marie’s involvement in music making exponentially, at the final performance in Bristol’s Colston Hall it was her turn to raise the roof! After the performance school staff and her parent both told us how amazed they were by her performance:

“ For Marie this was an opportunity to do something that was absolutely independent and to achieve in her own right, not being dependent on someone else pre-choosing what she might do or how she might do it. It was just amazing. Marie has in a sense a difficult time ahead for her and to have had something that was just so, you know, sparking in her life. It’ll be a memory that will be with her and her family forever.

Fiona Richings - Headteacher - Baytree School

“ I still can’t believe what Marie did! It was just absolutely the best thing I’ve ever seen her do.

Marie’s Mum



# Challenging Expectations – Raising Aspirations

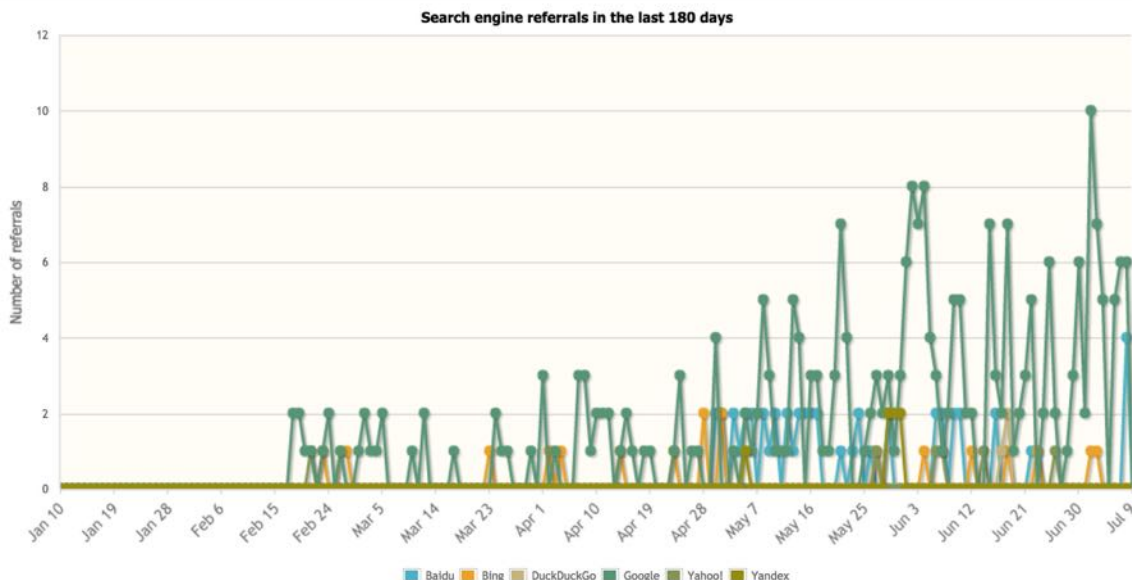
“ Having a school orchestra is something to be proud of, it’s something for the students to be proud of, it’s something for the staff to be proud of.

Bridgette Brooks - Teacher - New Siblands School

The Open School Orchestra project set out to raise the aspirations of the young musicians we worked with. It also set out to raise the expectations of those who support them and the broader general public by showcasing their musical journeys and accomplishments in a prominent public performance. We have gathered a range of qualitative data from orchestra members, teaching staff, parents and audience members to help us demonstrate the broader impact that the project has had in these areas alongside quantitative data that illustrates the online engagement of the general public with the project.

## Increased public engagement with the project demonstrated through online statistics and indicators.

The Open School Orchestra project has enjoyed a great deal of public engagement. Since launching our OpenUp Music website on 18th February 2015, and as of 3rd August 2015, it has received 26,561 visits from 5,020 visitors. This is further illustrated by the steady increase in search engine referrals OpenUp Music has received during that time:



During the final three Open School Orchestra performances our Twitter account received wonderful array of messages from audience members, articulating on a personal level the way in which the public were engaging with the project.

**The OHMI Trust** @TheOHMITrust · Jul 2  
Lovely evening @BPMbristol fast forward event with @openupmusic kids performing @Colston\_Hall. Absolutely inspiring what was achieved.  
5 retweets 4 stars

**Jeffrey Johns** @BigJeffJohns · Jul 2  
Wow @openupmusic @Colston\_Hall just watched the Braytree school orchestra do a beautiful dreamy / droney take on Beethovens 7th Symphony!  
2 retweets 4 stars

**abstract Lucas** @abstractLucas · Jul 4  
My incredible young man, and the incredible people at @openupmusic #ffwfest @Colston\_Hall #accessiblemusic abstractlucas.co.uk/2015/07/smler...  
3 retweets 5 stars

**Jennifer Raven** @JennRaven · Jul 2  
Beautiful music from @openupmusic young musicians with some pretty incredible #accessible instruments! @Colston\_Hall #fastwdfest #SENDMusic  
3 retweets 4 stars

**Siggy Patchitt** @siggypatchitt · Jul 2  
What a start to #fastwdfest @Colston\_Hall @openupmusic orchestras were so good. Such a privilege to see them. #SENDMusic @youthmusic  
3 retweets 5 stars

**Liz Lane** @lizlanecomposer · Jul 2  
@openupmusic @Colston\_Hall Wow!  
1 retweet 1 star

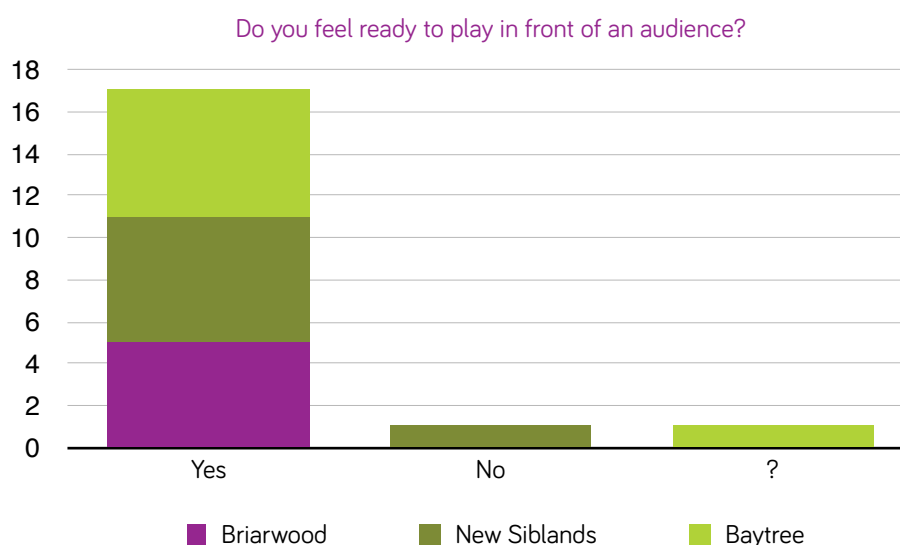
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## Participants report increased confidence in their musicianship.

### “ Confidence is making music.

Aaron - Open School Orchestra member

During rehearsals leading up to the final performance at Bristol's Colston Hall, we spoke to participants about how they were feeling. As has already stated, none of the 36 children and young people in our three new orchestras had ever played as part of a large ensemble before and only 2 had performed music in front of people, outside of school. We felt that a good way to gauge the confidence of participants in regard to their musicianship would be to find out how they were feeling about the up and coming performance. As part of our “yes/no/don't know” question series we asked participants if they now felt ready to play in front of an audience. Their feedback clearly articulates an increased level of confidence for a group that has had so few opportunities to showcase their work to the general public before:



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## Stakeholders and audience members report an increase in their expectations of young disabled musicians.

After the final performances at Bristol's Colston Hall we revisited each participating school to talk to headteachers about the impact that the project had had on their school communities and the way in which it had affected expectations:

“ You've given us a strong glimpse that there's always something more that we can do. It's reminded the school community that there's nothing we can't do.

Andrew Buckton - Headteacher - New Siblands School

“ It's certainly raised expectations of how children like this can perform...The work that you have done this year to enable our pupils to achieve and experience so many new and exciting opportunities is truly incredible and inspirational.

Fiona Richings - Headteacher - Baytree School

“ This was a completely new avenue of work that I never thought we would go down...the fact that it's contained within something new and dynamic - the orchestra - that in itself underlines that these youngsters are doing something much bigger than we might have expected them to do.

David Hussey- Headteacher - Briarwood School

Staff within schools were also keen to tell us about the ways in which the project had increased their expectations, both in relation to specific orchestra members and more generally:

**“ Expectations have been raised across the board as have our pupils' aspirations.**

Ben Edwards - Teacher - Threeways School

**“ If someone had said 5 years ago that he would be sat in an orchestra playing I wouldn't have believed them.**

Liz Batt - Teacher - Briarwood School

**“ Did Tim exceed expectations? Yes. Nobody would have imagined the joy and participation levels that he would have had.**

Andrew Buckton - Headteacher - New Siblands School

And finally, audience feedback provided by parents and members of the general public during and after the performance made it clear that expectations had been raised across the board:

**“ I love it when our children do something that blows, even our, expectations out of the water.**

Jo Ojosworld Henley

**“ Fab to see Kai taking so much pride in what he was doing, listening to the adults and following instructions. Not something we had thought Kai would be physically / developmentally able to do / understand. Loved every second.**

Lucas - Kais Mum

**“ I found it really enjoyable and a very satisfying, meaningful sound-world to be in. It's one of the most impressive things about your projects - that they work on so many levels simultaneously: offering creative freedom for students, structured appropriately for a huge range of abilities and inclinations as well as providing an engaging soundscape for the dispassionate listener. That you set up a framework within which the music works whatever the children decide to do whilst still highlighting and celebrating their every decision is impressive indeed. It's a fine line to tread and a special and precious thing which requires enormous creativity.**

Katrine Reimers

We received such a huge volume of audience feedback that it would take up a further 4 pages to list in its entirety. All of the feedback was positive as can be seen by the word cloud on the following page, generated from all of the written feedback received from audience members.





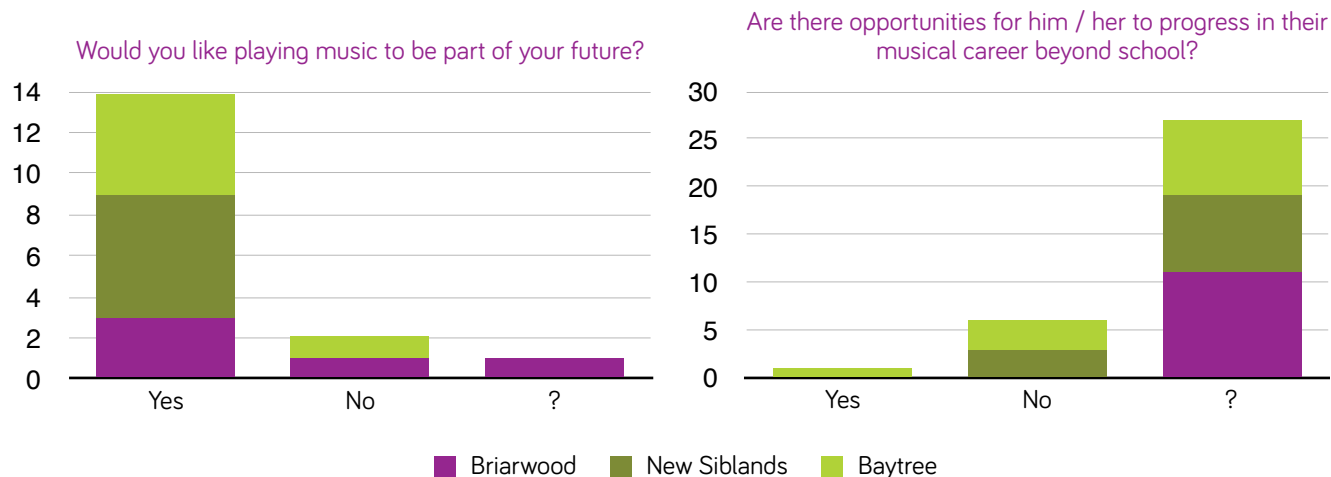
## Final thoughts

### “ When I watch something, I now think I wanna do it someday

Dan - Open School Orchestra member

At OpenUp Music we pride ourselves on the critical analysis of our practices. We believe that it is of the upmost importance that we not only celebrate our achievements but also recognise areas that require improvement. We also believe that by sharing that learning through documents such as this we can help the broader sector to improve. Reading through this document and having heard the entirely positive feedback that we have presented here you would be forgiven for feeling that this document has been something of a whitewash. Where is the critical evaluation? What areas did not go to plan? In truth this project was a total success. The Open School Orchestra project excelled in each and every outcome, something that is clearly articulated through the rich data set we have painstakingly collected and presented to illustrate each outcome indicator.

So aside from a glowing report, what have we discovered that can help us improve what we do and positively affect the current musical offering to young disabled musicians in the broader sector? I believe that the answer to that lies within two final sets of data collected from orchestra members and staff during the project. Close to the end of the project, as part of our “yes/no/don't know” question series, we asked orchestra members if they would like music to be part of their future. We were delighted with what they told us - an overwhelming yes! At the same time we also asked staff members to tell us if there were opportunities for each of the young musicians taking part in the project to progress in their musical career beyond school, the results of which can be seen below:



The way this data sits in almost perfect opposition is telling of the ways in which we as a sector are failing to match the musical aspirations of young disabled musicians with adequate opportunities for them to progress. This admittedly limited data set can be interpreted in one of two ways, both of which are unsatisfactory. Either those progression opportunities do exist but school staff and young disabled musicians are unaware of them, or else those opportunities do not exist and organisations are failing to cater for musical progression beyond the horizon of isolated projects.

The creation and promotion of a clear musical progression route has informed our thinking at OpenUp Music from the very start. It's wonderful that we are establishing school orchestras where none existed before, but to what end? Where will the young musicians we are working with take the skills they have acquired? How might they progress to the next level of musical excellence? What is the legacy? In September 2015 we will be launching a project that will provide an answer to some of those questions and a meaningful progression route for the musicians taking part in our Open School Orchestras and beyond - the South-West Open Youth Orchestra.

This ambitious project does not assume to provide an all encompassing model for musical progression. The South-West Open Youth Orchestra might not be the best option for young disabled musicians who would like to progress through sequenced dance music, practising their DJ-ing skills or playing and recording as part of a four piece punk or ska band.

Instead OpenUp Music is choosing to focus its attention on challenging, extending and reinventing a single vehicle for musical progression - The Orchestra. Ultimately it is our intention that this focus will lead to the launch of a National Open Youth Orchestra by 2018 and, in so doing, we hope to have opened up a distinct musical progression route that stretches from school all the way up to organisations like our partners the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the British Paraorchestra. I would be very grateful if organisations reading this would consider signposting the young musicians they work with to this endeavour, and please let us know what you have to offer so that we can return the favour.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry Farrimond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the name.

Barry Farrimond - Managing / Technical Director