



MOPS Take 2 Music Matters @ MOPS - Term 6 Report and Evaluation

KEY

ML: Music Leader

LS: Little Star Group Music Sessions

KW: Key Worker

The Term 6 report and evaluation was completed by Kath Borer (Project Leader and ML) and reviewed by Kirsty Mees (Evaluation Officer)

OVERALL AIMS

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

Term 1 - The project started off with all sessions online via Zoom. The children and their families were provided with weekly sessions in Group Music, 1-1 Therapy and various videos & calls with the MOPS team to engage in sensory sessions. Sessions were adjusted and children joined in with Zoom music sessions either at playgroup or at home depending on the day they were onsite. Finally in March, music sessions resumed onsite with all children and staff returning full time. A live concert and sharing concert for the families did not occur during Term 1 due to restrictions around COVID19.

Term 2 - All sessions resumed face to face with strict health and safety measures in place including the use of face masks and visors. This marked a considerable difference in the children's participation and engagement. Sing and Sign also started their sessions as they were unable to start in Term 1 due to lockdown. Rainbow sensory sessions ran by the MOPS team also resumed. We also held 2 live music concerts which were performed to the children only, and outside in the garden space. We were unable to hold a sharing concert for the families due to restrictions around COVID19.

Term 3 & 4 - All sessions were face to face with strict health and safety measures in place including the use of face masks and visors. We also held a live music concert and a sharing concert for the families.

Term 5 - All sessions were face to face with strict health and safety measures still in place however face masks and visors were not required. We held a live music concert and a sharing concert for the children and families both of which were face to face without restrictions.

Term 6 - All sessions were face to face with no restrictions. We held a live music concert and a sharing concert for families.

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

Term 1 - Training opportunities for the MOPS workforce in Term 1 occurred informally through discussions on the different music sessions, children's responses and the types of experiences the ML was presenting. Formal training for staff in Term 1 included the Sounds of Intent (SOI) framework. Formal training relating to musical skill development was postponed in Term 1 due to COVID19 restrictions and access to the instrumentation needed as well as the practical nature of the training requiring face to face sessions.

Term 2 - Formal training relating to musical skill development was again postponed in Term 2 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The practical nature of this training and the specific instrumentation needed requires these sessions to run face to face and with continued restrictions in place was deferred until Term 3. Staff continued to develop their musical skills and understanding through practical engagement within each session, observation and consistent discussions and feedback with LS ML.

Term 3 - Instrumental training for the MOPS team took place this term face to face. The team had two instrumental training session and began to put their instrumental skills explored in the training session into practice during the playgroup sessions, including during 'Hello time' and using instruments with the children throughout the playgroup day.

Term 4 - Instrumental training for the MOPS team took place this term face to face. The team had one instrumental training session. This term they explored musical storytelling .

Term 5 & 6 - We implemented training KW's during Music Therapy sessions on how to use instruments with each child depending on their needs and also through discussion detailing what activities work best for each child. This had a positive impact and KW's are using instruments in different ways to evoke responses from the children they work with. Short discussions at the end of each session allows time for reflection and how to adapt, support and take things further for each child. This also did not impact on KW's time and was much easier, rewarding and gave a practical knowledge and insight on how to best implement.

OUTCOME 1 - PERSONAL

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

The following live music concerts were performed at MOPS. The children and families really benefited from the variety of genres showcased and showed positive interactions, listening and social/communication skills. Concerts were a real highlight throughout the project and enabled the children to engage with new instruments, musicians and to have fun with their families and friends.

This first 3 concerts were held during normal playgroup hours. COVID-19 restrictions meant families were not able to attend these concerts and therefore the MOPS team and children were only those present. The remaining 3 concerts were held with families and friends present.

Friday 21st May: Concertini - The Sandhurst Brass Quintet. Comprised of 5 professional military musicians performing Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone & Tuba.

Long term COVID-19 restrictions resulted in some of the children not having experienced live music before. The ML was a little concerned that the Brass concert may be overwhelming for some of the children due to the volume and vibrating nature of brass instruments. However the children were completely captivated by the sounds and vibrations. Child Y was clearly moved by the music. She moved her body in ways we had not seen before, held her head up high to listen and watch and made lots of vocal interactions.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

[Brass Concert](#)

[Brass Concert Videos](#)

Thursday 15th July: Kidz Live Ceilidh - Comprised of 3 professional musicians playing guitar, percussion, violin and vocals.

The Ceilidh was a fantastic interactive concert where the children and team were fully immersed in the experience. Child J and S immediately showed interest in vocalising and were given microphones to enable them to sing and vocalise with the group. Child S also wanted to be involved and pushed herself (in her chair independently) to the front of the stage to play percussion with the musician. All the children were eager to join in and have a go. The concert also provided moments of calm which some of the more sensory children really enjoyed.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

[Ceilidh - Dancing](#)

[Ceilidh - S playing - singing](#)

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

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

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

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

Saturday 26th February: Singing Hands -

This concert was MOPS with families present since the pandemic. All the families, many for the first time, were able to share a musical event together. The smiles, laughter, singing and instrumental sounds were abundant and everyone commented how wonderful it had been to all be together once more and sharing music.

The children were captivated by Suzanne and Tracy. Many of whom are great fans as regularly watch their YouTube channel and/or have seen them performing live pre-pandemic. This was Suzanne and Tracy's first time performing in front of a live audience again and the joy from them as well as the children was clear to see. The children responded beautifully by either singing or signing along to songs. The children's families and parents (who had clearly been practicing) were commended by Singing Hands for their enthusiasm and excellent signing skills.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

[Singing Hands](#)

Saturday 11th June: Quintessentially Brass

The children and their families were delighted by the concert performed by Quintessentially Brass. The repertoire ranged from familiar movie songs to contemporary children's songs such as the Peppa Pig theme tune and Paw Patrol. The children played along with percussive instruments and sensory props. As soon as they heard a familiar song they would often stop and stare, become animated and excited and for those who were vocal, verbalise or make sounds.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

[Quintessentially Brass](#)

Sunday 11th December: RASPO Steel Orchestra

The children were mesmerised by the sound of the steel pans. The children are usually quite active during concerts feeling the need to move around the space with families. However it was enchanting to see the children be so still, listening and tuning in to the gentle sounds of the steel orchestra. The children were captivated throughout the concert and the families too. The children also had the opportunity to play the steel pans at the end of the concert which they were delighted about. This interaction with the performers and their special instrument is so very important for the children to feel the vibrations and texture of the instruments themselves.

Extracts from the concert can be seen on MOPS facebook page. Links highlighted in blue.

[Steel Pans](#)

[Shaking Along](#)

[Rudolf The Red Nose Reindeer](#)

Below are some further video and photographic examples of children engaging in musical experiences at MOPS.

[Playing the piano with feet](#)

[Rolling - Wheels on the bus](#)

[S Playing the piano](#)

Observations from Group & Music Therapy Sessions

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

We have documented 100's of positive observations throughout the life of the project which are documented in our termly reports that can be found on the Youth Music Network. Below we share 2 case studies who were also part of the Sounds of Intent framework.

VIGNETTE 1 - Child: Y ML Observations

Y initially found the group music sessions challenging for a number of weeks. She became agitated, very vocal and cried. We decided to try a few music therapy sessions with Y to see if this helped her to process the sounds and instruments and explore her emotions in a more focused musical experience.

In group sessions for a few weeks before each activity I would sing Y's name and get close to her so she could understand she was part of the music session and that she could join in how she wanted to. This really helped and gradually she appeared more content and calm. After a few weeks I did not have to sing her name to keep her calm within the group. She would listen and look and follow me around the room. She held tightly to her shaker and bells and played along with her friends. She would rarely become upset in group sessions.

Music Therapy Session 1

Y was instantly calm when I played 'A Million Dreams' which is one of her favourite songs. She was relaxed, clearly listening by turning her head towards the guitar and my voice, maintaining eye contact and smiling. Y also followed instructions today using her switch. We sang 'Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' and pressed the switch on 'Up'. We then asked Y to find 'Up' in the scarecrow song. She did this lots of times with relative ease and was then able to translate this to the drum. We held the drum in front of her and she hit the drum with her hand on 'Up'. These actions are not easy for Y and we have to give her time and space in order for her to connect musically and socially with the music leader and key worker and respond.

Y enjoys the sound of the chimes initially and likes to find the chimes with her hand however she gets stuck in a repetitive movement when playing. It frustrates her and it's almost as though she wants to play it a different way but can't quite work out how to do so.

Y was upset and distressed a few times today but with gentle singing and telling her she was 'doing it' she responded well. Y needs constant encouragement in order for her to understand that however she wants to participate is ok and she is playing and singing so really well.

Music Therapy Session 2

What a huge difference today, Y immediately was very calm. She responded firstly with lots of vocal sounds when we were singing hello. We need to leave big gaps for Y to process and respond also lots of repetition.

Today she enjoyed the song 'Rain is falling down'. She listened intently and looked at the rain maker, we then explored actions supporting her hands up and down. We then progressed to the drum and she was able to lift her hands and bang down on the drum on 'Down' following the musical cue. Fantastic!!

We played the chimes again today and Y was again calmer and more relaxed. She did start to get into her receptive pattern but I moved the chimes away and back again when she was more settled. These feelings did not escalate and she was able to control how she wanted to engage.

Y also had fantastic grip today of the shaker. She followed 2 songs with lots of listening and playing her shaker by moving her arm and hand. Y also made vocal sounds in the microphone when asked to make a sound.

Fantastic progress for Y in just two sessions.

The Sounds of Intent Framework has enabled us to track individual children over a period of time and over a number of different musical sessions.

For Y the observations below track her progress from April 2021-January 2022.

From these observations and those highlighted above it is clear that Y is responding to music physically (moving her head and hands/arms) and vocally and can react and be proactive at consistent levels. Her interactive responses varied depending on the type of activity Y was engaged in.

VIGNETTE 1 - Child: L - Mitochondrial Disease (FB1X4)
ML Observations

L has been at playgroup for a number of years and is familiar with the ML. She often greets the ML as she enters playgroup by saying 'hello' and waving. She makes lots of sounds and says hello numerous times if the ML has not heard her.

Week 1

L loves to say 'hello' and sings and verbalises excitedly throughout the hello song.

L explored the chimes today by looking under them and around them before moving them with her hands. L understands the different patterns in the chime song of quiet and loud. She moved her hands more vigorously for the end part which was loud and more gently for quiet.

L wanted to play the cabassa independently without the ML holding it for her, she also vocalised choo choo as we sang our train song.

We played the ocean drum and L swayed from side to side with it to make the sound, she also shook it with vigor to make a splash sound. L listened and followed instructions brilliantly.

I asked L to play a shaker and a bell, one in each hand. She listened and responded for the first few times with the correct instrument each time!

L really enjoyed the sound and vibrations from the tongue drum on her hands. We played this together for a few minutes just enjoying the sounds and then sang goodbye.

L is easily distracted by the MOPS environment, other children, and my bag of instruments. She finds it challenging to focus on an activity for more than 30-60 seconds. For each activity the ML stretches the focus time for as long as possible. Often L will demonstrate new musical skills if the activity is repeated, and time extended, as she has the space to process instructions and share musical preferences.

Week 2

Today L vocalised Star, Hello, Choo Choo and Bye. She also made other vocal sounds such as kisses and shhh.

She was able to sit and engage for longer for each activity today instead of getting distracted and pointing to my bag numerous times throughout the session.

She really enjoyed the tactile beads on the cabassa and joined in with choo choo by rolling the beads. She also scratched, tapped, and made a small vocal sounds into the microphone when given an instruction.

Week 3

Today L sang and played the guitar without any instruction from the ML. She was straight in there!

L really enjoyed the texture of the pattern on the rain stick today and liked placing her hands on it and moving it from one side to the other. When she first heard the sound, she made her mouth into an O sound. She was excited to hear it's sound. We then sang rain is falling down, and she moved rhythmically with the rain stick from side to side.

We sang the same song with the drum with an emphasis on down. She liked scratching the drum with her fingers to make the pitter patter sound. She occasionally banged the drum on down.

L was very vocal today making lots of sounds throughout. She said down, star, oooaaahh, hello and goodbye.

We sang reach for the stars with chimes, L was very vocal as if singing along to the song with sounds I had not heard her make before. She loved the texture and sound of the chimes and wanted to play independently.

We again used the Microphone which she enjoyed scratching and tapping. L vocalised a choo choo sound today but does not seem overly keen on making a sound with her voice through the microphone. She prefers to scrape or tap it or hear my voice through it.

L engaged for longer periods today without being distracted!

Child L throughout her time at playgroup has gained in confidence, strength, and in expression of her ideas and preferences. L often can be heard saying 'Hello' to the MOPS team and ML's and familiar people she knows. In Music Therapy and group sessions L would often be distracted by sounds, other children or anything that was in her direct sightline. L has made huge progress and can engage for longer periods of time in 1-1 music and group sessions as well as her everyday activities during playgroup life.

Below are some examples of KW's notes on child L and her data from the SOI framework.

VIGNETTE 4
Data Captured from Sounds of Intent Framework for Child L

Domain R Note

L showed interest in the songs, especially those that were familiar to her. Lots of actions, babbling and touching the instruments.

Domain P Note

L was able to copy some sounds through songs. She picked up the last sound of a word like eeee and oooo.

Domain I Note

L imitates a simple beat using the instrument accordingly. It takes a while sometimes for her to respond but she will do it when she is ready and concentrating.

General Notes

L has had a lovely time today at music therapy. She enjoys exploring the various musical instruments. Shows different emotions and facial expressions to ML. Good listening and interaction through eye contact.

Domain R Note

Recognised changes in dynamics and tempo

Domain P Note

Played her chime bar throughout the song, playing with the leader and independently

Domain I Note

Actively played her shaker in group music today. Lots of eye contact and consistent playing.

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

The sharing concerts are a wonderful way to include the children's families, wider family and friends to be part of each child's musical journey and progress. Families actively participated with their children and for those children who were new to the playgroup throughout the two years they enjoyed the variety of musical opportunities on offer and could see first-hand the benefits of music making opportunities for children with a variety of different needs.

It was noted by the ML and staff comments and feedback that overall in Term 2 when restrictions were very much still in place the children appeared more confident, socially aware, vocal, tuning in to others e.g. ML, peers or MOPS team, vocalising considerably more than in lockdown, excited/happy about music sessions and enjoyed moving their bodies to music.

We always had time at the end of each sharing concert to speak to the families about their children's progress. All comments from the families were positive about how much their children love all the music sessions and the variety. We often heard about the continuation of musical enjoyment and exploration at home and the wider impact music can have for the children at MOPS.

Families comments/data captured:

“L loves her music sessions, they make her so happy”.

“At bedtime B pretends to be you and reenacts your music session, singing the songs with her ukulele”.

“From watching the (social media) videos and talking to S key worker I can see how determined she is to play and sing at music time.”

“We will miss all the music at MOPS, we hope her new setting will support her as much as MOPS have with music and sound making”

“R found his voice at MOPS we hope he continues to do so at his new school. Music has definitely helped him”

“Already I can see that M is joining in more with musical sessions. He was unsure at first but coming here today I can see now that he is so engaged, dancing and moving about and coming up to you. He obviously feels more comfortable and happy now and able to participate how he wants too”

The project will document the development of communication responses within the group and individually.

Weekly observations and written notes have been documented throughout each term by the KW's. These reflections enabled us to reflect, change and update lesson plans and to provide a progressive and effective curriculum. The observations also enabled us to discuss and evaluate any partnerships we had been working with to see if the delivery was working for the majority of children at playgroup.

Some of our findings are documented below:

VIGNETTE 5 Observations throughout the life of the project

Term 1 - During Lockdowns

When reflecting on feedback and observations from Term 1, KW's and the ML noted the overall impact lockdown may have had on vocal and communicative responses for some of the children. As children returned to face to face sessions, KW's have observed examples of children using less vocal communication to express their needs and preferences and in their interactions with the musical stimulus, adults and peers. However, examples of new forms of communication and extension of communicative skills was also observed for some of the children.

Comments from KW's relating to communicative responses include:

'My key child's communication has stepped back, she has been very unsettled, and this has limited her communication responses.'

'I have seen that other children have grown in confidence and are communicating as well as they were previously.'

'B and A are signing and talking more, using new signs that have been taught at home.'

'We have noticed that some children's development has changed since the last lockdown. BB is much more vocal and now putting together sentences. SB has more single words but behaviour has become more challenging. However on the whole the children have adapted well to being back at MOPS very quickly and seamlessly.'

This impact of lockdown on communication and musical learning has varied significantly for each child. For the children at MOPS, the support and consistency provided by MOPS staff and the ML has allowed many of the children to continue their progress and feel a sense of security in multiple learning environments. This has supported many of the children in their transition back to face to face sessions. Results overall show examples of the children's resilience and ability to adapt to new forms of exploration as well as the importance of social opportunities on communication.

Musical Training

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

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

'Y took part in one of our musical stories, using instruments for different actions in the 'Enormous Turnip'. She really was engaged by this and listened intently, we also did it to '3 Little Pigs' and again she found it captivating as this was not a story she was familiar with.'

Sing and Sign

Term 2 - 'BB has I think been really well engaged with all singing sessions and will often be seen signing along to all sessions.'

'The sing and sign sessions started off with the children not always being fully engaged but as the term went on and it became more familiar to the children there was a lot more focus. Several of the children would be distracted by Jess the cat in the box and would get up and try and take it out.'

Term 3 - 'There is a small cohort of children that are responding better to sing and sign due to their ability to engage better with it, in particular AB, SB and BB are much more vocal and will join in the actions. I have noticed that DB zones out of group music sessions unless she is supported to engage in the activity. I am not sure that the more complex needs children engage as well with sing and sign, YW hasn't done as well in group music over the last term. I think sing and sign works better if the child has better understanding, as they adapt better to something that is less familiar each week.'

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

Term 4 - 'I think the majority of us thought the content was not geared to most of our children. Those children whose communication and attention skills were more advanced gained the most from these sessions. The delivery was too quiet and too quick with lots of short songs in rapid succession. The children would have benefitted from the songs being repeated. The children seemed to respond to 'Jessie' the cat. The ML was lovely and did try to take on board our suggestions, but it certainly would not have worked well with our new cohort of children in Sep 2022'.

'In general, I think sign and sign just didn't appeal to all, some of the mobile children would gravitate to the box that Jess the cat sat in and pull the cards out as that was the part that they wanted then it stopped the non- mobile children seeing what was going on and caused a distraction. I had thought because we are a Makaton environment that it would make sense to all the children but retrospectively, I think it was relevant to our children who sign but was lost on the wider group who probably need to see signing close up for it to have a relevance to them'.

'A was probably the one child who fully engaged with sing and sign and I think it was because she is a Makaton user and can sign effectively. A always enjoyed sing and sign as it was very much her world of Makaton signing. Although this session was well delivered I felt the broad scale of our children's needs, meant they got very little out of this half an hour session losing focus very quickly'.

Group Sessions

'Overall I think the children really enjoyed the face-to-face sessions and as the term went on they became more focused and engaged in the sessions.'

'Little Star session continues to be the session I think the children engage the best with. They understand the routine of the session even though the songs change, for example the pattern of the drumming will on occasion spur a child to start banging the rhythm out as they are put down on the floor.'

'L enjoys all of our music sessions that we offer and she will engage in them by moving to the music and signing to a familiar song. However, she is easily distracted by other things going on around her, she will try and play with the child next to her or she will seek to get an adult's attention and then smile and wave to them. L is often unsupported in a music group, but I don't think that an adult would keep her focused on the group I think she just has a fleeting attention span.'

'Z was so engaged with music therapy, but I don't think he engages so well in general music sessions particularly if he is in the group unsupported.'

Music Therapy

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

'T's confidence in music sessions has increased greatly throughout the last term. He now sings loudly and with gusto to familiar timetable songs such as the weather song and hello song, and is an active participant in the call/response songs during Little Star. He showed throughout his one to one music therapy sessions that he had learned many of the songs that the ML uses regularly by anticipating the songs as soon as she produced an instrument. This confidence was observed during our Christmas term concerts, when he gathered up the instruments and put them in the musician's handbag singing the Little Stars tidy up song during our carol concert, and when he approached the rock and roll band to sit behind the drum kit during the performance!'

'Y is always engaged by music. Music therapy sessions would engage her completely. During 'Million Dreams' from Greatest Showman being sung to her she calmed and listened intently and then vocalised to it. In response to goodbye being sung to her she listened and vocalised a goodbye in response.'

'L truly enjoys all her sessions in Music Therapy. She is improving a lot when it comes to her concentration. Good listening with lovely eye contact. She uses her body movements in responding to the ML's simple request. L also showed interest in various instruments. She is confident in exploring each one of them through banging, shaking, tapping, etc.'

Rainbow Singing

Rainbow Sessions are led and delivered entirely by the MOPS team

Term 2 - 'We took these back to the basic songs we had started out doing with this group as we felt the children didn't engage so well with unfamiliar songs where we had tried to link them to the planning theme. The basic songs engage the children much better, but I feel that the session worked better when we used our sensory props which due to covid has not been happening and I think this means the children don't engage as well as they did. Towards the end of the term, we started putting the mats on the floor for the non-mobile children to stretch out on and the mobile children interact with them - this worked much better, but I feel that the dynamic of the group isn't the same without the props. During the Rainbow session, we have always had good engagement from SB, AB and BB who join in with signing and actions and making a choice if they want to hear the song again. Our roly poly song usually has AB very excited!'

Term 3 - 'With Rainbow Singing we decided to keep it more familiar rather than try to theme to curriculum as we struggled to find songs that the children engaged with, however we haven't been consistent in delivering it and need to address this, partly as Friday was our day and a volunteer music leader started to come in more regularly and we weren't organised to deliver it on a Thursday. One thing that I have noticed is that nearly all the children engage well with our simple song session where they choose from song cards, and seem to get enjoyment from this.'

Term 4 - 'We have been doing Rainbow Singing on a regular basis, mostly Fridays but we did it today (Thursday) and I think it's good to alternate the days as we reach a different group of children. We have moved it back to the middle of the hall and are using the soft mats and screens. We went back to our original songs, and I think this has worked really well, the children (who have been here a while) remember them and join in. We have made it a relaxed approach and encourage the children to take active involvement through signing, choosing colours, popping bubbles, and playing with instruments. I feel they have been more captivated by this approach and show their enjoyment.'

OUTCOME 2 - WORKFORCE

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

Due to COVID19 the ML was unable to deliver face to face in depth training for MOPS workforce during terms 1-3 due to the practical elements of delivering music making opportunities.

MOPS staff continued to reflect on individual children's achievements as well as the impact of each of the music sessions through informal feedback and discussion with the ML.

In term 3 & 4 after so many restrictions relating to COVID-19 it was fantastic to hold our first instrumental training session with the MOPS team for this project. The session focussed on songs familiar to the team and the setting using a variety of tuned percussive instruments.

The team tried to implement their training by playing the instruments during hello time. The ML observed the group and the addition of instrumental sounds enabled the team to maintain a rhythm, sing in the same pitch throughout and the children were surprised as they observed the staff doing this and reacted with giggles, confusion and awe.

Here are some images of the team using ukulele with the children throughout the playgroup day and during their training.



During Term 4 we explored different ways of bringing out the musical skills of the MOP's workforce. We recapped on previously learnt skills which included familiar songs that the team use in sessions with the children throughout the playgroup day. This included using the ukuleles, tuned hand bells and chime bars. We discussed the importance of pitch to ensure all the team are singing harmoniously together and also the tempo of the songs to ensure all staff members are singing at a steady speed.

We moved onto Musical Storytelling which the team really enjoyed. We chose one of the books at MOPS which the children have access to; The Enormous Turnip. Using a selection of sounds that the team choose we told the story elevating it with musical sounds and phrases. We repeated the instrumental sounds throughout which enabled the story to be repetitive for the children and then added in new sounds for new characters or changes. This was a really simple and easy way for the team to bring stories to life using simple musical sounds.

It became apparent that during such difficult times to be working in settings with COVID restrictions still in place e.g. extra cleaning and safeguarding matters, that MOPS team found it difficult to have regular training sessions and to follow up the practice and lesson ideas that have been provided. As music is so embedded in MOPS everyday practices such as singing, playing instruments, making music and singing during story time etc. the team already provided such a wide range of opportunities for the children to engage in regular music making and sound making activities appropriate to their needs. Therefore we adapted our training for term 5 & 6.

In term 5 and 6 we implemented training KW's during Music Therapy sessions on how to use instruments with each child depending on their needs and also through discussion detailing what activities work best for each child.

This worked really well and KW's used instruments in different ways to evoke responses from the children they work with. Short discussions at the end of each session allowed time for reflection and how to adapt, support and take things further for each child.

CONCLUSION

The Music Matters at MOPS project not only provides insight into the many benefits of long-term musical experiences for young children with additional needs but also into staff/ML cohesion and the impact consistent, collaborative, adaptive and enjoyable musical experiences can have on individual growth and achievement. The musical programmes included in the project are reflected upon in ways which explore what is best for each individual child and the group as a whole. The staff at MOPS are remarkable in their musical approach to daily experiences and this is reflected in the children's joy and musical achievements as well as in family engagement and active support during sharing concerts.

With acknowledgement of the challenges and impact of lockdown for many of the children at MOPS we also highlighted the commitment of the families, ML and MOPS team in providing a consistent and engaging learning environment that online sessions played in supporting the transition back into playgroup. The provision offered to families acknowledged the importance of musical experiences for the children at MOPS in supporting wellbeing, connection with others and creating moments for musical learning and interaction in the home environment.

Across the project we have seen the benefits incorporating Makaton into musical experiences can have for the children at MOPS on both communication skills and musical learning. An inclusive tool which can support communication and vocalising as well as signing. Inclusion of Makaton to support routine, structure, familiar words, phrases and songs was extremely successful. More complex makaton benefited those who were utilising it as a significant part of their communication however others may not have accessed those extensions of use. Term 3 outlined examples where Makaton was used as a tool to not just communicate needs/preferences but to share musical understanding. In Term 4 we see this develop further as Makaton has become embedded into the daily practice of staff and ML's and is utilised consistently by many of the children through singing and signing activities. We see opportunities to celebrate the use of Makaton during live performances with a concert focused on Singing and Signing which highlighted the support and engagement of families in the use of Makaton in the home environment.

Over the duration of the project we have seen many examples of the impact of the ML's experience as a practitioner in drawing out musical and communicative responses through improvising in the moment and adapting activities based on children's explorations and musical reactions, cementing their musical understanding and celebrating participation. Extended musical responses are representative of the children's engagement and

motivation through supportive, consistent and flexible musical guidance and provision including varied musical activities and experiences and individualised adaptations and support. The repertoire and resources were adaptive, interesting and developmentally appropriate - always challenging the needs of each child.

The MOPS team are enthusiastic about the benefits extending musical play throughout the day can bring with observations providing examples of the children's engagement and focus, particularly during one to one interactions. Training feedback from the MOPS team also highlights the challenges around staff confidence, practising these new instrumental skills and ensuring these activities are part of the daily timetable. This feedback is vital to ensure that future projects support and explore these challenges.

Observations and reflections in the later terms focus on respect, awareness of and acknowledgement of children's preferences and on providing opportunities and support for children to share and express their ideas and needs. This focus resulted in children becoming more confident, comfortable, and motivated to engage. The children engaged through moving, vocalising, playing instruments, making choices, and interacting in self-initiated ways appropriate to their needs, which supported communicative and musical outcomes. ML's and KW's provided space and time to explore in ways each child felt comfortable with as well as sensitively extending and challenging this exploration, resulting in new musical responses.

Observations also describe examples of children's individual communicative goals extending through successfully processing different cues and instructions. We can reflect further on this as we consider the way in which music supports the processing of verbal and gestural cues through musical activities exploring instrumental choice, theoretical extremities – fast / slow, loud / soft, pauses, phrasing, solo / group playing and performance.

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

The project has been a huge success with children making considerable progress in communication, listening, emotional and musical skills. We have been fortunate to have secured further funding for 1 more years through external funders due to the positive impact of the Music Matters @ Mop's project. The reports and data captured enabled us to prove that projects such as this provide growth and valuable learning skills for children with additional physical, emotional and learning needs.