

Collaborative Additionally Resourced Provision Project

Evaluation Report



Delivered in partnership with





**“Lily and Ollie have
made huge progress
this year and I think
the music’s got a big
part to do with that!”**

Jess, class teacher

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Project overview

Music Masters (MM) partners with five inner-city London state primary schools – its ‘Flagship Schools’, delivering a programme that centers around musicianship, string instrument learning and creative development for every child.

While all children are invited to participate in the programme, MM is aware that some children may benefit from further intervention and support to enable them to thrive with their music making and progress in a way that is right for them. As such, MM was keen to benefit from Live Music Now’s (LMN) expertise in enhancing music-making for autistic children and children with additional needs, particularly as one of MM’s Flagship Schools, Prior Weston Primary in Islington, has recently opened an Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP).

As part of its Inspire Programme, LMN is piloting a new strand of work in ARPs, working with 18 schools in Liverpool, Harrow and Somerset, embedding training for LMN

musicians and support for classroom staff to build musical confidence.

MM’s Emerging Educator programme enables musicians who identify as aspiring educators from diverse backgrounds to gain experience within our Flagship Schools through paid work opportunity whilst receiving support and training. This project expanded that role, allowing one Emerging Educator to develop their teaching practice in working with autistic children and children with additional needs over a sustained period of time, supported by LMN.

We are extremely grateful to the Vernon Ellis Foundation for making this project possible.



Delivery model



Project outcomes

After the initial briefing meetings, the following intended outcomes were outlined for the children participating in the project. Since the development needs of the children in the ARP were on a broad spectrum, certain outcomes were specific to particular children.

It was also identified that it would be important for school staff members who work regularly with the children to participate actively in the sessions, so that they can support the delivery and feel more confident in using music in their regular teaching work at the provision. **Please note that pseudonyms have been used in this report to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Any photographs don't directly correspond to the children that are being mentioned in the quotes.**



Engaging in shared attention and interaction

Facilitate opportunities for children to engage and interact with peers through music.



Enjoying an experience of shared play and fun

Create a playful and enjoyable environment to foster social connections.



Supporting emotional regulation

Use music to help children manage and regulate their emotions.



Developing turn-taking skills

Encourage children to take turns, promoting patience and cooperative play.



Becoming more comfortable with different volumes

Help children with sound sensitivities become accustomed to varying noise levels.

Evaluation design

Considering the scale of the project with the diverse needs and the nature of intended outcomes for children, a primarily qualitative approach was used for evaluation, as it could provide the depth of understanding that informs future project design.

To support innovation and continuous learning, a mix of reflection tools were used throughout the duration of the project. An observation visit by an expert in the practice of music and autism was also conducted to both provide feedback to the facilitators and to report on the intended outcomes.

Data Sources:

- Weekly Reflection Sheets – filled by facilitators.
- External Observation Notes – filled out by field expert.
- End of Project Focus Group with school staff and project facilitators – led by mentor.
- End of Project meetings with MM and LMN project delivery teams.



Results

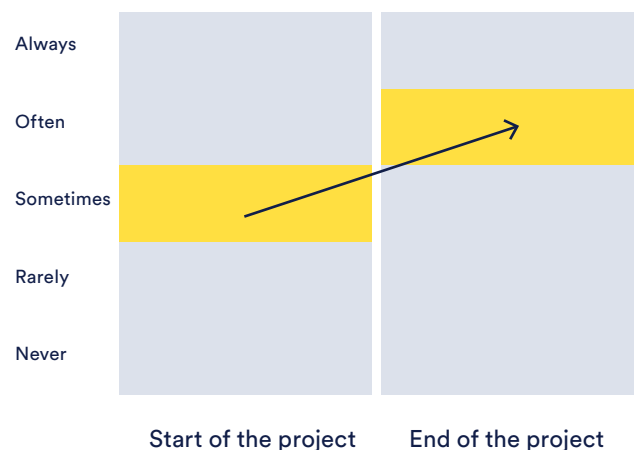




Most children demonstrated improved group engagement and heightened sense of enjoyment in music

- There were some initial challenges in achieving focus and attention with the musicians trying several different approaches with mixed success. However, the children became more settled with time and by the end of the project were regularly engaged for the entire 25-minute session duration.
- By the end of the project there were visible signs of happiness, such as smiling and active participation for children compared to the start of the project where it would be difficult to gauge their attentiveness.
- Certain sensory activities, like using the Lycra sheet, were reported as being highly effective.
- The class teacher observed that the children seemed highly engaged and collaborative during music lessons despite struggling to engage in group activities in other subjects. Music provided them with a space for play and enjoyment that was harder to experience in other subjects.

Extent to which the group demonstrated shared attention and positive engagement



“For Lily and Ollie, it has been really difficult in other subjects to engage them both at the same time. And by the end of the music sessions, they were both really engaged. And that is really impressive. They’ve made huge progress this year and I think the music’s got a big part to do with that!”

Jess, class teacher

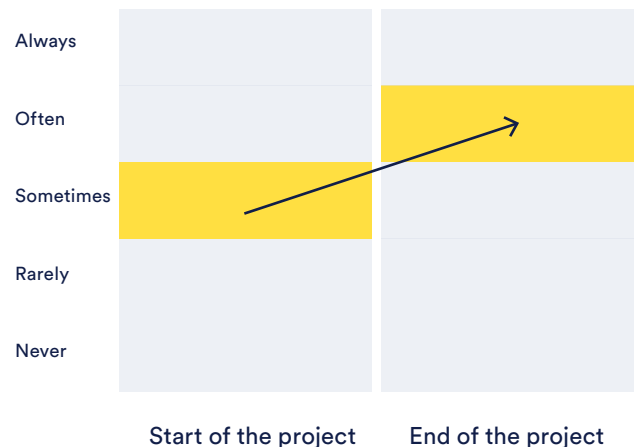




Music was highly effective in supporting improved emotional regulation for children in different ways.

- Overall, the project effectively supported emotional regulation for most children, using music as a tool to calm and engage them.
- In several cases, even if the children began sessions in a dysregulated state, they would gradually manage to regulate their emotions by the end of the session. This was highlighted as a major success of the project by the class teacher.
- Some children, however, needed extra tailored support to show progress. The support could be in the form of specific visual or kinesthetic activities, or moving to an individual lesson format, or using more movement and dance-based activities that they enjoyed.

Extent to which the group demonstrated emotional regulation



“ There was one day, when we were walking into the classroom and saw Lily sitting outside with Jess (class teacher) on the floor. Jess was singing the Hello song to her to try and get her ready for music. Lily stayed outside for the Hello song, and then we went out and we showed her the things we were going to put on the Lycra. She then came inside, and those photos that you see, where she is grinning from ear to ear, you’d have no idea that she had just been crying outside, lying on the floor refusing to do anything just 10 minutes before that. Within that half an hour, she went from, zero to 100, and then managed to really enjoy and partake in the second half of the session. ”

Emma, LMN Artist

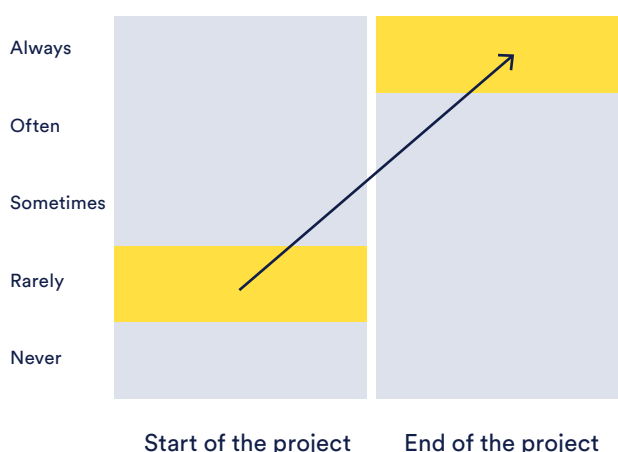




Children demonstrated improved co-operation, patience and willingness to take the lead.

- Overall, the children demonstrated consistency in turn-taking, with certain weeks of full participation and willingness to take solos.
- One child in particular showed significant progress, moving from avoidance to actively volunteering and engagement in musical tasks. At the beginning of the project, they would often shut down due to a lack of confidence, but by the end of the second term, they were confidently participating and being assertive in communicating their willingness to taking turns.

Extent to which the group demonstrated turn-taking skills



“At the beginning, if we were doing turn taking things and it got to Ella’s turn, she would shut down and not want it to be her turn. From then on, we were very careful not to put the spotlight on her, because it just made her feel uncomfortable. But then there was one time in the second term, when we were asking the group who would like to take a turn, and she went, ‘me!’ and put her hand up. She stood up, came to the front, and took her turn, and she was ready, and we were blown away! It was just beautiful, and musically as well, you know, she was really in time. She was always anticipating what the activities were going to be by the end and knew how all the songs worked. She seemed very regulated, and happy when it was music.”

Emma, LMN Artist

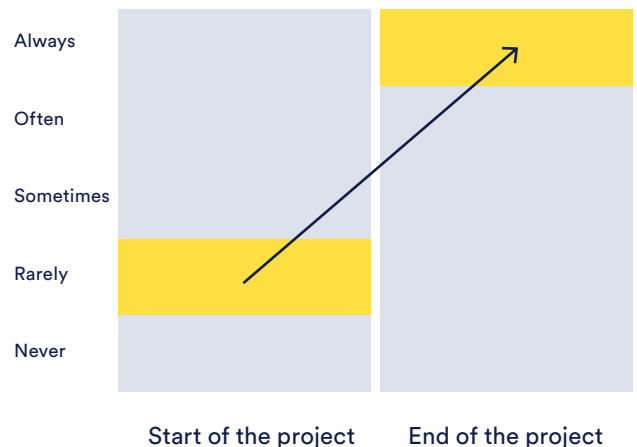




Children showed tremendous progress in reacting to loud sounds.

- Some children who would be extremely uncomfortable with loud noises at the start showed tremendous progress through the project.
- Kai who is typically uncomfortable with loud noises like screaming, felt very comfortable with the varying volumes during music lessons.
- Ollie, who would always wear ear defenders before, no longer needed the ear defenders in the last few weeks of the project. He not only tolerated different noise levels but actively enjoyed them, marking a substantial improvement in his comfort with sound.

Extent to which the group demonstrated comfort with different volumes



“ When he first started in the provision, Ollie had bone ear defenders throughout the day, whether it was a quiet space or a loud space. In the music lessons by the end of the year, he was sitting there more than just tolerating, he was enjoying those different volumes, I think that’s fantastic! ”

Jess, class teacher





Engaging with music had benefits for the children that transferred to their wider school life.

- The class teacher highlighted how the enjoyable experiences children were having in the music sessions and the skills they developed, supported learning and engagement in other areas as well.
- For instance, Lily, Ollie and Sam, who initially did not join in with songs and actions in other subject lessons now actively participate, demonstrating a positive transfer of skills from music lessons to their wider school life.
- Observing that positive effects engaging with music has had on these children, other teachers at the provision have now started to incorporate musical activities in other subjects.

“It’s great progress certainly for Ollie and Lily, and how that has impacted the rest of their learning as well, seeing that across the other topics, because this experience is just so much more enjoyable for them, and so they’re much more willing to take part in it, and motivated by it than say, Phonics or Maths. But then, they’re using those skills in those subjects as well, so it’s, yeah, fantastic.”

Jess, class teacher



Logistical challenges

- With the ARP still in its first year, staffing adjustments resulted in many teachers not being able to consistently attend the music sessions.
- It was noted in the observation visit that it was important to reduce distractions in the room, including objects and people as these were potential hindrances to achieving the ideal learning environment. This was difficult to mitigate however, as the room was multi-purpose and used on a carousel basis as part of a tight timetable, leaving the facilitators with limited time to set up the learning space before the start of the session.
- The facilitators had to be adaptive in their planning and efficient in how they used the limited resources. Having one of the class teachers as a constant and supportive point of contact for the project was really effective.
- There were also challenges in arranging timely resources like paid apps in iPads and it is important to keep in mind that navigating administrative processes for such requests can require extra time and coordination.



Key learnings

Despite the logistical challenges and limited resources, the following teaching practices worked most effectively for the facilitators.

1. Using Sensory Activities:

- Activities using sensory props like the Lycra sheet were highly effective, encouraged engagement and supported regulation.

“I think the Lycra was lovely to see. Lily was always stimming and just sort of really, really engaged. And Ollie, he loved to be the one to pick up the whale. Yeah, that was a really lovely one to see them all join in and enjoy!”

– Poppy, MM Emerging Educator

2. Consistent Structure with Flexibility:

- Keeping the session structure predictable through visual timetables and routines (e.g. “hello” and “goodbye” songs), provided a sense of stability and comfort for the children.

3. Child-Led Learning:

- While maintaining a routine, it was also important to be flexible to adapt to the children’s needs and interests during the sessions. Responding to children’s cues, interests, and actions during activities helped foster a sense of curiosity and stronger connection with the facilitators.
- Recognising and accommodating these different needs would also extend to simplifying the structure of activities or shifting to 1:1 sessions for some.

4. Providing Choices:

- Offering children choices, for instance the instrument they want to play, empowered them and enhanced participation. The facilitators realised early on that when children felt more in control of the session, they were much more on board with the session's activities.
- Taking turns holding the microphone while everyone is singing proved really effective, making children feel special and giving them individual moments to shine.

“By the end of the project, Milo would always make requests. He’d be like, Emma, can I do that thing again that I did last week? Or can we actually sing the other song? He knew what he liked, and he felt he could request it. He really liked the microphone and the ukulele and asked for both of those at times.” – Emma, LMN Artist

5. Integrating existing practices from other lessons:

- Using visual tools like PECS for communication helped children express preferences effectively. Some even transitioned to verbal communication over time, demonstrating significant progress.
- Combining musical experiences with familiar stories used in their other lessons made the experience more relatable for the children.

“It was also really nice to see that Ruby at the start, she would maybe point to a card to say what she wanted, and by the end she was actually verbalising what she wanted. When she knew that she wanted ‘loud’, and she’d tell us rather than just being able to point at a card. So, that was really good progress as well.” – Poppy, MM Emerging Educator



Impact on educators

Another component of the project design was to provide learning and development opportunities to a musician who has educational aspirations, through the Emerging Educator pathway at Music Masters.

- Reflecting a few months after the project ended, the Emerging Educator highlighted how the project provided valuable skills that they have been able to apply to other subsequent projects.
- The extended duration of the project enabled them to track the children's development over time, offering deeper insights compared to shorter workshops they had done previously.
- The positive outcomes of the music engagement for the children were clearly evident during their practice and they had a highly positive experience engaging in the project.

“ I was so thrilled to have been able to be a part of this wonderful project, and witness first hand the impact that it had on young people's development. Through music, we were able to work on many social skills such as turn taking and teamwork all while aiming to provide enjoyment. Amongst other activities, we explored creative composition, playing together and alone, and storytelling through music. We had the flexibility to move groups around throughout the project, even offering some 1-1 time for those young people that were unable to access the activities within a group setting.

Most of all I was so happy to see the outcome, and when reflecting with school staff they felt very similarly about the music sessions helping the young people in their day to day lives. ”

Poppy, Music Masters Emerging Educator 2024

Acknowledgements

Live Music Now

Prior Weston Primary School

Phoebe Osbourne, Mentor

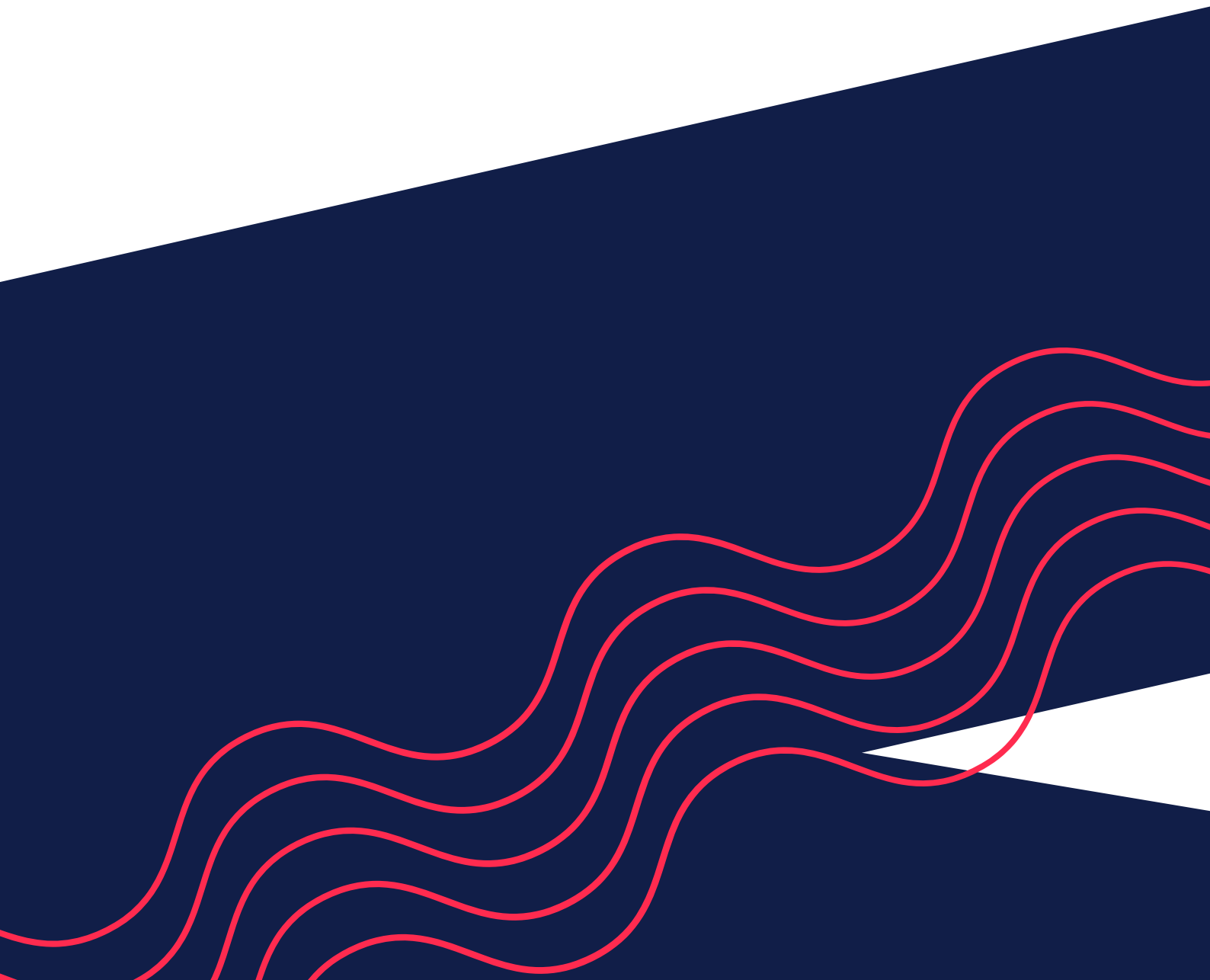
Poppy McGhee, Musician

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