MUSIC AND ABILITY
Resource Pack for Teachers

‘There is always a way in with every child; it might take a while to find it but there is always a way in.’

CBSO Musician

1. INTRODUCTION
The CBSO’s Music & Ability Project partnered with three Special Educational Needs schools within Birmingham, Solihull and Worcestershire over a five-term period between 2017 and 2018. Funded by Youth Music, with the support of an additional thirteen funders, the project aimed to develop positive relationships with these schools in supporting the musical development of their PMLD (profound and multiple learning difficulties) cohorts of pupils. The project simultaneously aimed to increase the workforce and delivery skills of CBSO musicians in working with children and young people with PMLD in special educational needs school settings.

The CBSO’s Music & Ability project has aimed to act as a catalyst in developing new musically, mutually creative, educational opportunities for pupils, schools and orchestral musicians, by identifying a programme that is of benefit to special schools who serve children with the most complex needs within their populations and producing a valuable specialised learning legacy to be shared within the orchestral sector.

This Teacher’s Pack has been developed as part of the Music & Ability project in response to non-music specialist teachers working in the schools, who suggested developing a resource to help support their own development in delivering music activities with their pupils. We wanted to bring together some of the learning from the project and share this to help teachers develop their own music making in the classroom.

2. WHY MUSIC?
Music can offer new opportunities for communication, learning and self-expression. Music making can aid emotional well-being by relieving stress and anxiety and stimulating the imagination. Music making can provide rich opportunities for sensory exploration and provide access to a wider range of frequency levels than the human voice alone. Making music can promote social interaction, group awareness and confidence. You can engage with music through listening, participating, exploring and engaging emotionally with what you hear. Music making links perfectly with intensive interaction and person-centred communication.

Using rhythmic patterns, repetition, pitch and contrasting textures of sound in your music making can offer new ways for children and young people to tune in and engage in the classroom. Music can be made from a whole range of sounds: the whisper of a voice, or an intake of breath. It can be a simple, well-known song sung together, or a wild soundscape created by a musical ‘conductor’ who directs sounds with a gesture of their hand, or the blink of an eye. Music can be personalised, creative and fun.
3. **HOW CAN MUSIC HELP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR SCHOOL?**

UK Department of Education figures (Jan 2018) state that 2.9% of the pupil population (253,680 pupils) have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. A further 1,022,535 pupils are on SEN support. Children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) are often seen as the hardest-to-reach members of this pupil population, with many facing challenges of health inequality, disability and socio-economic disadvantage (Marmot Review 2010). Children experiencing health inequality may have also experienced periods of long-term hospitalisation, resulting in periods of isolation and reduced opportunities to develop their natural communicative musicality (Hawley 2018).

Recent research identified that the needs of this population of children are changing, as they face more complex combinations of intellectual and physical disability (CLDD) and called for a rethink in teaching methods to meet the learning needs of these pupils more effectively (Carpenter et al, 2011). Citing engagement as the key connection between a pupil and their learning outcome, Carpenter outlines the process of engagement as a multi-dimensional experience, with seven engagement indicators – awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation – forming the basis of the Engagement Profile and Scale resource for schools (Revisiting Engagement, 2016). Music is a natural choice for creating rich, multi-sensory and engaged learning opportunities for children and young people in the SEND classroom.

**Engaged musical experiences** form the basis of the Sounds of Intent Framework (SOI), developed in 2002 under Professor Adam Ockelford, which seeks to ‘investigate and promote the musical development of children and young people with learning difficulties’. SOI supports a wide range of professionals in being able to contextualise reactions of pupils within a musical framework, and to build on these responses with all pupils, regardless of need or disability. Whilst the framework is not used by all special needs schools in the UK, its development has done much to raise awareness of best practice musical provision for children in special needs schools today, and to highlight the musical abilities of learners in special needs education in the UK.

This pack is designed to support the use of Sounds of Intent by teachers, but also can be used as a stand-alone resource, to give ideas, starting points and confidence in making music in the classroom.

4. **WHAT MAKES A GOOD MUSIC SESSION?**

‘An opportunity to engage with the instruments through a multi-sensory approach catering for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic needs.’

**Assistant Head Teacher**

A variety of activities, including a range of listening and playing/exploring opportunities and pacing activities well, all helps to make a good session. Allowing time for pupil-initiated music making, such as conducting sounds through gesture, making choices/preferences as to which instruments to play, when to play loud/quiet or fast/slow, or deciding how to structure a musical composition is important. Using a song to say hello to each pupil/learner can cue everyone in to the start of the session and allow you to see how reactions change from week to week. Choosing specific groups of sounds to explore can encourage focused listening opportunities. Thinking carefully about when to focus on rhythm, when to focus on pitch or melody, when to focus on listening and when to focus on playing can help you to get the best from your session.

5. **WHAT INSTRUMENTS DO I USE?**

‘Pupils are reaching out, exploring and touching the instruments, feeling the vibrations…. more confident.’

**Teacher**

You can use any instruments you want for your music session, but you might want to think about what kind of sound you want your learners to focus on, and the musical preferences of pupils. As well as school percussion instruments, you can use voices, body percussion, found sounds or objects from your classroom such as pots and pans, shells, silver paper etc. Try to link the sounds you use with the activities you want to develop with your group. Use groups of sounds e.g. wooden, metal, pitched, drums. Think about what instrumental contrasts might be useful to explore: deep drums might be good for one activity, contrasted with pitched, higher frequency chime bars for the next, for example.

You may decide to use one instrument, like a tambour (round frame drum with a resonant skin) or small set of wind chimes, to pass round the group so that each pupil can take their turn to play/explore it. You may want to copy their response and have a musical conversation, or at other times you may use a selection of instruments for the group to use and play/stop together.

If you are using pitched instruments – chime bars, xylophones, keyboards – you can use groups of notes that sound good together: C, D, E, G, A; just white notes; or just black notes on a keyboard will work well and are a good place to start.

6. **BEATERS**

Each beater will make a different sound on your instrument. Try them first so that you know what sound to expect from each beater. You may want to focus on using hands to make sounds and choose instruments like drums or tambourines to do this; or you may want to develop skills in coordination and use instruments with beaters, such as chime bars and xylophones. Your pupils will have their preferences too and you will find out which instruments suit each pupil as you develop your session.
7. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Depending on the needs and abilities of your class you may want to incorporate switches or iPads with instrument/music apps into your session. Small ‘wowee’ speakers can target sound and vibration and can be placed on the body or held by hand. Many of the activities here can incorporate recording sounds onto switches so that pupils can play their part using them.

8. GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR INSTRUMENTS

Think about how your pupils access the instruments you have. Do some of your pupils need to be able to feel vibration and have sensory support to access sound, and therefore need to play more resonant instruments? What support do pupils need to be able play instruments independently? Are pupils visual, sensory or auditory learners? How might their learning style affect the choices of instruments you offer to them?

9. MUSIC ACTIVITIES – A SELECTION OF IDEAS USED IN THE MUSIC AND ABILITY PROJECT

Example 1. P16 Groups – encouraging opportunities for musical choice-making

‘We then developed a high/low conducting game and the pupils really got it.’

Set a weekly session plan:

1. ‘HELLO SONG’ – a vehicle for composition straightaway.
   Develop...
   Add CHOICE: DYNAMICS & TEMPO.
   This encourages communication, both verbal and sign.

2. LISTENING TIME: PLAY or PERFORM a PIECE
   Develop...
   Repeat and vary over time: use two contrasting pieces; play loudly or quietly.
   Pupils choose instruments to play along with the piece(s).
   Move around the room to sit between pupils on repetition.

3. TIME FOR CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
   RUMBLE AND STOP
   To introduce control of stopping and starting the music.
   Use groups of percussion, like drums, bells or shakers, or timp heads.

This can lead to:

CONDUCTING
Using gesture, signs, symbols or even eye movement for stopping and starting the music.
High and low (arms up for high, down for low); fast and slow (find suitable signals).
Also try opportunities for pupils to conduct their class mates, this all leads to them having lots of choices (which class mates, which instruments?) and making musical conversations with each other.

COMPOSITION
WRITE A SONG OR TUNE.
Pupils make their own words and own tune.
Use the Stave Board as a starting point...

‘We had already done exercises with them getting them to conduct high and low (arms up for high, down for low) we would play wherever they showed us to play, so they already understood pitch when we introduced the STAVE BOARD.’
STAVE BOARD

Pupils create a piece by placing the counters (notes) onto a felt stave/board, marked with five lines to make a musical stave.

‘Some would show us where to put the counter with eye movement, which made this a very accessible exercise.’

‘They would choose which instruments to play their piece... what speed... dynamic...and which colleagues and which instruments.’

‘We would record these compositions onto switches, so they could play them themselves, then they were also able to play the music they had composed on a metallophone... following their music on the stave!’

4. Finish with a JAM session, with all pupils getting involved

Example 2. Engaging Young PMLD pupils – ideas for sensory music making – using the three S’s

‘These elements allowed us ‘a way in’ with every child... ...a way to engage with the pupils through the course of the project.’

- The scrunchy
- Satellites
- Sensory elements

THE SCRUNCHY

‘Really pleased we have found things that work, like the scrunchy – it was our idea. With the small (younger) class this really helped – they found it hard to hold instruments and were dropping or throwing them or putting them in their mouths and the staff were not keen on this [we wanted to give the opportunity for the pupils to be able to explore instruments] – so tying instruments onto [the scrunchy] has helped.’

Musician

This is useful if pupils have difficulty holding or engaging with percussion instruments, or if instruments get thrown frequently. Taking turns and building anticipation became a feature of using the scrunchy. Using the scrunchy can allow pupils to work together as a group and be introduced to a range of small percussion instruments, or groups of sounds, over time.

Use a long-covered piece of elastic and tie instruments on with tape approx 1cm wide. This way the instruments stay put.

Ideas

Make up a scrunchy song:

‘Pass the scrunchy, pass the scrunchy, pass the scrunchy, time to play’ x 2

and use the scrunchy as a game of pass the parcel.

The scrunchy is passed through and over the hands and bodies of the children and when the music stops, the instruments are played and explored; this is repeated several times.

Develop

Over time, add ribbons for a more sensory feel.
Change instruments to add variety to the sounds being explored.
Gradually remove instruments so you are left with just one.
‘The children by the last term definitely had their favourite instruments and they were allowed the freedom to choose and play. A musician would be with each group and would improvise alongside the children or just encourage and enable the children to play their instrument. A musician would give a musical signal, a short piece of music, so the atmosphere wasn’t disturbed too much, as the boxes were packed up and passed to the next group.’

Satellites are a way to allow pupils time to explore more instruments. Carefully group the pupils according to ability and temperament. Have three boxes of instruments ready, one for each group. For example:

- one with wooden instruments: castanets, maracas, guiro (scraper)
- a tinkly box with bells, tambourine, scrunchy paper, wind chimes
- a box with larger instruments, ocean drum, djembe, rain stick and a bass bar

SENSORY ELEMENTS

‘Sensory elements became a very large part of every visit; we found it engaged the children especially as we quickly went from one element to another.’

Ideas

Change the lighting in the room: we dimmed the lights, added a disco ball and used finger lights.

Use a bubble machine accompanied by a recording of Schubert’s ‘The Trout’.

Use long, soft scarves to waft over heads and to gently touch some pupils with ‘Sailing By’ gently playing in the background.

Use Windmills, one for each child; use fans to blow them. Listen to ‘Windmills from Amsterdam’ as they move in the wind.

Use Timp heads to explore vibration: use one between three children and all join in singing a rumble song:

'We'll rumble and rumble and rumble and... stop.
Rumble and rumble and rumble and... stop.
Rumble and rumble and rumble and... stop.
Then we rumble and rumble some more.'

Tap and bang the tims, follow the children’s lead to make sounds, place the timp heads on heads to feel the vibrations.

Develop

When using the scarves, timp heads and the ball, also use a sudden stop element by using signing and/or vocal signals. Hold the silence, to give time for the children to react.

The Ball Game

‘The most powerful interaction I think of all the elements we tried.’
'Use a large bouncy ball to add a rhythmic element. Play Jack’s Jig (or a cheerful tune, not too fast, a melody on chime bars or a beat on a drum) to accompany. The children were in a circle and the ball bounced in the centre. Two musicians played at the same time as the ball was bounced. I went to each child in turn, bouncing the ball close to them and stopping suddenly, the music also stopped. During one session as I held the ball still right next to them, the child reached forward to touch the ball to restart the bouncing and the music. I tried it again and each time the child reached forward to touch the ball, they were in total control, conducting me, choosing when they wanted it to start again, there was no staff help. Over the weeks, it developed until one week every child in the circle reached for the ball or gave a signal in their own way to start the bouncing and the music again. It was truly wonderful and incredibly moving for the staff and the musician to see the children so fully engaged and the joy of anticipating their turn.'

10. OBSERVING RESPONSES

'It’s about the sound. M responds to speed, B to low vibration and slow. It’s interactive.’

Every child or young person is an individual. It may take time to see the developments being made in music making sessions. The Sounds of Intent Framework (SOI) may help you begin to note responses made by pupils and the SOI website has useful videos to give you ideas for activities too.

Here are two examples of pupil responses noted by CBSO musicians as the project developed over five terms. These may help you and your teams when thinking about the pupils in your class, how they are responding to activities in your music session, and the steps of progress they are making:

First Term:

- Responded to sound from the outset and enjoyed the interaction of the ‘Hello’ song that’s different exploring instruments. Needed plenty of support to do this.
- Repetition of activities each week helped him to anticipate them. He’s always been a good listener.

Second Term:

- He became more animated as he listened. Moving to the music in different ways according to the mood/character.
- Branching out to explore and play different instruments with support, beginning to show preferences.
- Anticipating activities and showing a lot of enjoyment of sessions.

Third Term:

- Engaging better with less hands to mouth.
- Great listening, watching, enjoyment and anticipation of activities.
- Eye contact greatly improved.
- Exploring different instruments with hands, head and feet and tracking his favourite ocean drum around the room.
- Much more vocal.

Fourth Term:

- Recognising different sounds that he was making (ocean drum).
- Recognising when he’d done something well.
- Exploring instruments independently.
- Anticipating his turn around the circle.
- Showing definite preferences of instruments.

Fifth Term:

- Keeping his attention around the circle. Very engaged throughout sessions.
- Great eye contact.
- Purposeful playing.
- Knows what’s coming next.
- Independent playing even with a beater.
- Making positive choices.
- Actively involved with activities.
- Very vocal.

Term 1

1. Responsive to sound. Enjoyed interaction of ‘Hello’ song
2. Positive anticipation of turn. Played drum – first time
3. Exploring the cello, took hold of the bow. Played independently.
4. Engaged listening, making hand movements to slow music.
5. Very engaged from start of session. Loved the activities, joined in with the ‘Hello’ song, played the drum, chose a shaker and played a little.
7. Loves the scrunchy and timp heads. Anticipating activities.

Term 2

5. Liking the rhythmic music, tolerating hand on hand help with rain-maker.

**Term 3 – start of Satellites activity**

4. Eye contact greatly improved. ‘Dancing’ a lot. Very excited during session.
6. Exploration of ocean drum, with the head, tongue, hands, feet etc finding different sounds. Holding the scrunchy. Very purposeful with playing. Played the gato drum again.
7. Intentional playing of ocean drum. Often on head, watching beads. Watching, listening, concentrating during session. Clocked the stopping of our music.

**Term 4**

1. Recognising the different sounds he was getting on the ocean drum. Looking through the drum to make eye contact. Hands barely in mouth. Very engaged throughout sessions. Loving the ocean drum and chimes.
2. Beginning to explore instruments independently in Satellite activity.
3. Becoming very involved in sessions. Choosing to use his feet to play. Anticipation of his turn around the circle.
5. Recognition from him that he'd done something well. Knows his turn is coming up. Vocalising a lot. Instruments not going in his mouth.
6. Beginning to wear gaiters to keep hands from mouth. This is encouraging him to engage with the instruments more. Sometimes we request for them to be taken off if it hinders his access to instruments. Tracking around the circle, great anticipation.

**Term 5**

1. Keeping his attention around the circle.
4. Knows what’s coming next. Showing definite preferences: sad when he doesn't get his preferred instrument. Playing tambourine with hands and feet.

### 11. **TOP TIPS TO HELP YOUR MUSIC SESSIONS FROM THE CBSO TEAM**

**Gaining confidence to deliver music sessions can take time.** The musicians found it helpful to remember that:

- Every child and every situation are different so what works brilliantly for one class might not for another.
- Sessions can evoke all sorts of emotions, from tears of happiness and joy to sadness.
- Use changes in dynamics and speeds to watch the change in pupil’s responses and behaviour.
- Repeating things is OK, in fact it is important! Don’t be worried about repeating the same piece of music or activity. Often a reaction happens when the music stops!
- You don’t have to play all the time, it is good to have silences/gaps in the music or only one person playing an instrument. This enables you to watch for reactions and gives the children time and a chance for them to hear single lines/one instrument.
- Don’t be afraid of silence, it can allow a calm to descend on the group. Silence can allow the pupils to fill the space. Use it to watch their reactions to silence and stillness. It’s a wonderful tool and can be very powerful.
- Make a book with pictures/photos specific to the class to link pieces of music together or to tell a story.
- Look at the setting you will be working in: is there enough room? Are there any major distractions? Would another space be available? Are the pupils happy going into different rooms?
- Don’t be afraid to sing, it’s a very good way to get all staff joining in supporting you as leader and it gives them a role.
- You can learn a lot from reflecting on the session and it doesn’t matter if something hasn’t worked as you thought it would.

### 12. **USEFUL RESOURCES**

Below are links to organisations providing outstanding work within SEND music making. These organisations deliver work, provide CPD, many have online resources, and all are a source of inspiration to help you develop your own creative music programme in school. Throughout our Music & Ability programme we have worked in partnership with many of these organisations, others contributed to our Celebrating Musical Inclusion event in November 2018.

**Sounds of Intent Framework:** [http://soundsofintent.org/sounds-of-intent](http://soundsofintent.org/sounds-of-intent)


**Live Music Now (UK Wide):** [www livemusicnow org uk](http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk)

**Jessies Fund (UK Wide):** [https://www.jessiesfund.org.uk/](https://www.jessiesfund.org.uk/)

**Mac Makes Music (Birmingham):** [https://macbirmingham.co.uk/ project/mac-makes-music](https://macbirmingham.co.uk/project/mac-makes-music)

**Accessible Arts & Media (Yorkshire based, but training offered throughout England):** [https://www.aamedia.org.uk/](https://www.aamedia.org.uk/)

**National Open Youth Orchestra (England):** [https://noyo.org.uk/](https://noyo.org.uk/)

**The Paraorchestra:** [http://paraorchestra.com/](http://paraorchestra.com/)


**LMS Supplies:** [http://www.lmsmusicsupplies.co.uk](http://www.lmsmusicsupplies.co.uk)
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