SOUND AND WELL! MUSIC MAKING AND WELL BEING IN EARLY YEARS

Evaluation Report
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3
METHODOLGY 5
ACTIVITIES 6
FINDINGS: CHILDREN 8
FINDINGS: EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS 18
FINDINGS: PARENTS 20
CONCLUSIONS 21

Report written by Catherine Orbach, Culture Shift, with input from Kate Murdoch and Mary Allsopp and the early years practitioners and nursery managers involved in the project.
SOUND AND WELL!

INTRODUCTION
The Sound and Well! project was an early years music project initiated by Hastings and St Leonards Children’s Centres and funded through Youth Music’s Open programme. It ran from October 2011 to September 2012. Sound and Well followed on from the success of the Children’s Centres’ Creative Partnerships programme which had culminated the previous year. At this point music making was identified as a specific area for development, with a focus on making links between music and well being and training/up-skilling early years practitioners. The proposal to Youth Music was developed with Kate Murdoch, a musician who had been involved in the Creative Partnerships programme.

AIMS
- To build skills and enjoyment of music making for young children, practitioners and parents in the local area
- To explore music as vehicle to promote Personal, Social and Emotional Development, as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- To offer professional development opportunities for the local Early Years practitioners

PROJECT OUTLINE
Four early years settings were engaged as project partners: Rainbow, Maplehurst and Athelstan Nurseries (all in East Hastings) and Greenway Nursery in the town centre. Each setting worked with Kate and a music leader trainee over 16 weeks, hosting two 30 minute workshops each week for a two groups of 10 children and a further 15 minute relaxation session. In most settings, four early years practitioners worked alongside Kate for a 4 week period, culminating in each delivering a music making activity.

The workshops focused on building a variety of music skills appropriate for Early Years settings including; singing, playing instruments (including unusual ethnic instruments), building basic skills in rhythm, dynamic, tempo and pitch and group skills. An important focus of the activities was a child-centred
creativity – and allowing the flexibility to go with the flow of children’s own spontaneous ideas.

A key aspect to the project was the desire to explore the use of music making as a vehicle to promote well being through the choice of songs, incorporating a relaxation session and using tools such as the Leuven Well being and Involvement scale to reflect on children’s participation in the sessions. Each setting was invited to plan for engaging parents in the project.

Opportunities were created to share learning and skills in each setting through a dedicated CPD session for the whole team. In addition two CPD sessions at the project end will create a platform to share the learning from this pilot with a wider community of early years practitioners, musicians and other partners working in early years, arts and health.

The commitment asked of each setting was significant. They were asked to enter into the spirit of the pilot and take an active role in reflecting on the learning from the programme. Senior nursery staff attended a planning, interim and final review session with the project team. Early years practitioners were asked to review each session with Kate and Sue, the trainee, and track children’s well being and music making skills as part of a wider evaluation process.

Culture Shift, previously Creative Partnerships, was engaged to work with the project team on evaluation, devising a framework of planning meetings, reflective practice and evaluation tools to help ensure the best possible legacy of the project.

Project team: Mary Allsopp, project manager and early years teacher with the Children’s Centres, Kate Murdoch, musician, Sue Bull, trainee, Catherine Orbach, evaluator, Culture Shift (previously Creative Partnerships) and Tracey Rose, Manager of Hastings and St Leonards Children’s Centres.
## METHODS FOR EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evaluation tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>music making</strong></td>
<td>To build skills and enjoyment of music making for young children</td>
<td>increased musical skills, enjoyment and confidence</td>
<td>ability to listen, play instruments, use voice, work as part of a group, know about musical sound families, use musical qualities, be creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>well being</strong></td>
<td>To explore music as vehicle to promote PSE Development as outlined in EYFS</td>
<td>developed children’s personal and social skills inc emotional literacy</td>
<td>high levels of involvement and well being, social interaction, awareness of self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>workforce devpt</strong></td>
<td>To increase skills and enjoyment in music making for EY staff and support them to deliver high quality EY music making</td>
<td>increase skills and confidence of practitioners and trainee</td>
<td>increased skills and confidence to lead music activity understanding of what makes good music making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITIES

SINGING
- Each session began with a ‘hello’ song, where each child and adult is greeted individually. The welcome songs involved Fuzzy (a furry puppet) or a glove with emotion faces. The glove was used once relationships had been established and children were comfortable to say how they were feeling.
- Each session ended with a ‘goodbye’ song: ‘Goodbye everyone, well done, well done! Let’s make music every day’.
- The song lyrics (created for the project) focused on playing instruments in an explorative, and often sensitive way (e.g. ‘stroke/tickle the the drum’) and also explored wellbeing themes (‘Give yourself a hug’, five-a-day, washing in the bath, walking in nature etc).

PLAYING INSTRUMENTS
- An ‘instrument family’ was explored each week - shakers, bells, drums and African thumb harps. Wind instruments were not included for hygiene reasons.
- The instruments purchased for the project were mainly made of natural materials with attractive decoration, and this provided additional interest.
- Children at a couple of settings made shaker instruments between visits, and these were used during the sessions.

RELAXATION
- A relaxation session was planned for the end of each session. Children lay down, with a blanket and listened to Kate’s songs and musical stories.

RECORDING
- Towards the end of the project, a CD was produced. Using a high quality hand-held recorder with instant playback through speakers, Kate began recording individual names, and finally recorded songs, involving children in listening after each recording ‘take’.

MUSIC MAKING STRATEGIES
- Where possible, individual children became role models for their peers; e.g demonstrating a creative way to play an instrument, which everyone then copied.
- Children took turns at leading the music making; standing at the front and getting the others to stop and start and increase and decrease the volume.
- Each activity was kept short, with plenty of ‘hands-on’ free time with the instruments, and physical actions to accompany songs.
- Sessions generally took place seated on the ‘magic carpet’, a clear participation zone for the children.
MUSIC MAKING AND PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PSED): OBSERVATION TOOLS

In order to track children’s music making skills and well being and involvement, an observation grid was devised that listed key indicators (see below) to look for each week. The well being and involvement indicators came from the Leuven scale, devised by a Belgian academic Professor Laevers and recently introduced into early years settings in East Sussex.

**MUSIC MAKING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIRED OUTCOME</th>
<th>PSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build skills and enjoyment of music making for young children</td>
<td>Developed children’s personal and social skills including emotional literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INDICATORS**

- **musical qualities**: children will learn to use tempo, pitch, texture, dynamic, duration
- **music making skills**: children will learn to listen well, use and discover own voice, play instruments, learn different song styles, take turns, recognize and know different sound families
- **being creative**: children use instruments in unusual ways, use their voice in creative ways, create new songs and word sounds, express own ideas through music, work together

**PSED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIRED OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement: children are concentrated and focused, interested, motivated, fascinated and actively participate, fully experience sensations and meanings, enjoy satisfaction of exploratory drive, operate at limits of capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well being: children feel at ease, act spontaneously, are open to the world, express inner rest and relaxation, show vitality and self confidence, are in touch with their feelings and emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSE: children select and use resources independently, form good relationships with adults and peers, learn to work in a group, taking turns and sharing fairly, understand people’s different needs, views and cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1 Musical qualities

Children learn to use tempo (fast/slow), pitch (high/low), dynamic (loud/soft), duration (long/short) and timbre (texture)

Observations: Alex explored timbre and tempo with the frog scraper (mpl); Maia knew the material on the thumb piano was metal and was able to play it loudly and softly (gwy); the long and short sounds were very successful (gwy); Polly claps in a pattern of 3; all children are aware of pitch and tempo; Olivia volunteers to clap in front of everyone. She can go slower to faster, stop in time (gwy); Minkah can shake the shaker loud and hard (gwy); children explore textures of sound and dynamics and how drums are made; Children developing an expressive language through the use of drums.

Outcomes

Children have learnt about musical qualities and can apply them to playing instruments and singing songs.

Children build knowledge over time. New children joining the group noticeably take time to catch up.

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: Justin watches Kate, he leans on Amy and after a while he shakes his head to the music (gwy); Michael very keen to join in and sang loudly (gwy); Taylor and Callum are unable to stop shaking the shakers (gwy); children took turns at being conductors, talked about loud and soft (ath); children leading stop/start and introducing tempo (ath).

From the very first session, all four settings report on children beginning to explore musical qualities as they begin to play instruments and sing songs. The quality of observations all tell a story of children engaged and interested in the learning to make music. Children concentrate and are focused, interested, motivated, fascinated and actively participate, fully experiencing sensations and meanings. Many note that children are operating at the limits of their capabilities. It is also clear that their confidence is developing. The Leuven scales tracking individual children show high-levels of engagement as children learn these core skills.
1.2 Music making skills

Listening well

Observations: All children sat round Kate and used great listening skills which have really improved over the weeks (ath); children really focused and listening especially to long sounding instruments (ath); they listen well (rbw), they all listened very carefully as they each had a go with the instruments (gwy); children were able to listen and follow instructions and patterns well (gwy); Peyton listened to relaxation story at end (mpl).

Outcomes

Children have listened to follow instructions
Children have had to listen hard in order to copy rhythms or songs
Children have focused on listening to appreciate different musical qualities – loud/soft, high/low
Children have had to listen hard to know when to start and stop and when it is their turn to sing or play

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: Concentration and cooperation good for the ages of the children and considering the length of the session (ath); week 4 – all children participated well – maintain eye contact and listen well- they are operating at the limit of their capabilities (rbw); children extremely focused – mental activity and experience are linked (rbw); children love recording and listening to own voices (rbw); Fantastic turn taking by listening to each others’ frog sounds, great respect for each other (ath); Amelia didn’t want to take part but listened very well (gwy)

Good listening is at the heart of this project. Throughout the course of the project, staff reflect on the remarkable quality of focus achieved through the music making activities. Children focus for longer, their interest is held. They are fascinated by the instruments and they learn to listen to each other as they take turns and share the sounds they have made. Reference is made to the value of sitting in a circle, maintaining eye contact. The relaxation sessions demand a different kind of listening. Some children, apprehensive about taking part, took part simply through listening and slowly developing the confidence to do more.
1.2 cont. Using and discovering own voice

Observations: Some of the quieter children finding their voice (week 3 at gwy); children copy Kate singing (gwy), Ava sang loudly with Josie to the frog song remembering the sounds (gwy); Peyton had good pitch and enjoyed the singing (mpl); children had fun with voice sounds and noises (mpl); they copy the sound aaah from Leon and change it to a deep laugh; Owen makes a mmm sound with his mouth using the vocal chords (gwy).

Outcomes

Simple strategies such as the hello song ensure that every child takes part and sings their own name.

Children enjoy exploring the different sounds they can make with their own voice.

The children respond enthusiastically to the recording and playback of their own voices.

Some children took longer than others to find their voice. In some settings they divide groups according to levels of confidence.

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: Teddy names each child in the Hello song with confidence (ath); children get really excited about reciting own names (gwy); Confidence – voice recording hearing voice amplified (mpl); children getting confident to show/tell how they want to play/sing (mpl).

It is clear that children have been given the opportunity to explore the sounds they can make with their own voice. Activities range from exploring sounds to the delight in singing their own names in the hello song. Towards the end of the project the staff reflected on the excitement attached to making a recording for the CD. Many children have never heard their own voice before.

Some children are more confident than others. At Maplehurst, they produce a photo story documenting how one child’s confidence grew over 6 weeks. She starts at the back sitting on the knee of one of the practitioners; slowly she edges forward, still supported by the practitioner, a week follows and she is sitting on her own and taking part although at the back of the group, finally we see her at the front confidently taking part and enjoying the music making.
1.2 cont Playing instruments (simple rhyme and coordination)

Observations: children using drums in the way Kate showed them in the previous session they had remembered well (mpl); shake the shakers side-side and up and down (ath); children learn about rhythm and beat as they learn to play drum and frog scrapers; enjoy playing drums – good call and response (mpl); Max has good fine motor skills and coordination using chime bells; play simple rhythms (rbw), Freya copies lots of actions and steadily taps out a beat that friends follow (gwy); children really engaged with African thumb harp and other instruments (mpl); Hannah loved the elephant necklace, shaking it and telling you the colours (mpl).

Outcomes

Children learn how to play a range on instruments and are encouraged with each to explore the range of sounds and ways each can be played.

Children learn to play in time, follow a rhythm and stop and start together.

Children learn to play the instruments independently.

Involvement/ Wellbeing/ PSE

Drumming suits children that like to be more active, especially boys (rbw); children interested and motivated, operating at limits of capabilities (rbw); smiling faces (rbw), children at ease and acting spontaneously (mpl); Leo wants to lean across and feel vibrations (mpl); one child that is often upset on arrival is soothed by playing instruments (mpl); some children dance along when shaking the instrument (gwy); children handle instruments with care (ath). This worked best sitting in circle, so that children could pick an instrument to explore, and then switch (music leader).

Children are delighted by the sounds of the instruments and exploring the sounds they can make. They are fascinated by the African instruments and engaged and immersed in the activities. The drumming specifically appeals to the boys and satisfies their urge to be active. At the other end of the spectrum a child one setting reports on how a child lacks confidence and is nervous is soothed by going to play the instruments. It restores her equilibrium.
1.2 cont Learn different song styles

Observations: Children love learning new songs and now making up their own; after the session Hannah went to the garden to sing the Hello Song to the dinosaurs (mpl); children loved the vegetable song; children enjoy learning new songs and often sing them throughout the day (rbw); children learnt old songs in a new way (mpl); Hannah focused during action songs (mpl).

Outcomes

Children respond enthusiastically to the songs that throw a spotlight on each of them in turn such as the hello song and the puppet song. In this the puppet has different emotion faces to communicate how each child is feeling.

They like using props as in the vegetable song where each verse focuses on a different vegetable held up by the music leader.

Parents report that children are singing the ‘bath song’ at home.

The children’s ability to remember songs week to week is remarkable.

Involvement/ Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: children respond to Hello song (except Marney), and maintain eye contact and say hello confidently when their turn comes (ath); in touch with feelings and emotions with song about the sea (mpl); children enjoy learning new songs and often sing them throughout the day (rbw); Harry chooses angry glove puppet because his Dad said don’t wake up so early (rbw); children enjoy vegetable song, swapping vegetables and saying what they are (mpl); there has been a real change... Children who may not have previously felt motivated at song time have really engaged (gwy).

Kate introduces a variety of songs that support children’s well being and involvement. There is a real sense of enjoyment. Children sing the songs through the day, at group time and at home. Many are based around taking turns to sing; this teaches children to respect each other and work as a group. Staff recognise the value of different songs; the hello song builds children’s confidence as the group say their name; the use of puppets helps explore feelings and the vegetable song helps children remember the names of vegetables, handling vegetables in some cases for the first time. This song ends with opening a pea pod and discovering the peas inside.
1.2 cont Take turns/learn about stopping and starting together

Observations: Children taking turns at starting songs (mpl); children start to take turns and work as a group (wk3 rbw); children take turns at leading the group and saying stop and go; Olivia guides the music by standing and clenching her fists to stop and opening her hands to start; children leading songs and rhythm patterns (wk 8 mpl); playing the small thumb harps and other unusual African hand held instruments was a popular activity, and the children became good at taking turns (music leader).

Outcomes

Children learn to take turns; this is particularly effective with the songs that are organized around turn taking.

Children learn the commands to stop and start and take turns at leading each other.

Children learn to take turns with the special instruments; handling them with care and passing round the circle.

Involvement/ Wellbeing/ PSE

Observations: used good eye contact with peers (mpl); children really enjoyed the songs and the joining in actions; showed confidence in starting songs (mpl); children lead really confidently (gwy); learn to work in groups, taking turns and sharing fairly; good group skills starting and stopping together (mpl); fantastic turn taking by listening to each others’ frog sounds (ath); all children were able to take turns (most of the time) and share fairly throughout the session (gwy).

Turn taking and learning to play/sing together is at the heart of the music making in this project. Children learn how to take turns very quickly; following the pattern of songs; learning to listen to each other in turn and understanding that music making relies on careful attention to working as a group and following instructions. Children here have clearly grasped these skills and become confident to even lead each other. At the project end staff note how children have increasingly been able to take turns.
1.2 cont Recognise different instruments and sound families

Observations: Children join in exploring bell family of instruments and now remembering instrument families (ath); children asking a lot of questions about the instruments, especially the drums; children remember instrument families (mpl); know drum is made of metal (rbw); Tyler interested in instruments’ names and recognizes what they are made from (gwy); all children showed great interest in Kate’s wooden box instrument and listened to the sounds that it made (ath).

Outcomes

By exploring each instrument family separately children learn to recognise the sound world that each makes.

Children are completely in awe of the African instruments and pay particular attention to these and treat them with respect.

Children make connections between what instruments are made of and the sounds they make.

Children can connect sounds to different ideas such as the wind or a heartbeat.

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: children relate feelings to different drum sounds (ath wk 3); children really engaged with African thumb harps and other instruments; the children are hooked into stories about Africa (gwy); children learnt about instruments that make lovely sounds made from recycled materials - caring for the world (ath); Joseph learnt about how to respect instruments by listening to Kate and passing instruments back nicely (ath).

Children’s curiosity is aroused by the instruments. This is a significant aspect to what engages them in the session. They are part of a full sensory experience. Children enjoy exploring the instruments’ sounds, feel and look. They make links between what they are made of and how they sound. Staff comment on the fact they are ‘quality instruments’ and not plastic.

The African instruments stimulate children’s curiosity and imagination. They make different sounds and open up a window on other cultures and stories, helping children develop a more empathetic world view.
1.3 Being creative

Use instruments in unusual ways

Observations: A lot of the children were able to show others their own way of playing the drum (gwy); Oscar became a full lion with all his body making a big roar (ath); Lorenzo tried to make shaker sound like rain drops...he is keen to share his ideas (ath); Minkah offers his version on how to play the drum (ath); children tip drum upside down and blow through the bottom (mpl); all used frogs/sticks in unusual ways (mpl); children find different ways to use the beater (rbw); use instruments in unusual ways (rbw); bang shakers on their knees (rbw).

Outcomes

Children clearly delighted in being given the space to explore what the instruments could do and sharing their ideas with each other.

This approach to using the instruments allowed them free rein to experiment and explore their own ideas.

Staff reflected on the simplicity and value of this approach.

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: Amy experiments with sounds of the drums, following Kate’s lead...lots of conversation excited by her achievements (ath); Finlay confident and at ease and experiments with instrument (ath); week 2 children show real exploratory drive (rbw); spontaneity – playing instruments in new ways (mpl); Kenny independently shows us how to play frog in his own way (mpl)

The space to experiment with the instruments is a really successful aspect to the project. In terms of wellbeing and involvement, we see children building the confidence to explore things for themselves. They are excited by the sounds and sensations of the instruments. Staff refer often to the children acting spontaneously. The invitation to experiment with the instruments supports this.

The invitation to experiment is not a completely unsupported exercise. Staff recognise that it takes an adult to role model possibilities for children in order for them to get something from the activity.
1.3 cont Create new songs, words and sounds

Children remember songs and extend with their own songs; children are putting their own ideas across (gwy); Michael says you can pat your shoe with your stick; Ava finds lots of different ways to make sounds like frogs (gwy); week 4 children contributing own ideas for voice and body sounds (mpl); brought own ideas to frog song (mpl); all work together to use voice in creative ways (rbw); children have lots of creative ideas and textures (ath); learnt old song in a new way; one group started to make song words about fairies using the thumb harp (mpl).

Outcomes

Children delighted in exploring their own sound world using their voice, their bodies and the instruments

Children enjoy song making; they are helped with starting with something familiar – a tune they know – a song they’ve learnt and plan to extend

Children use their imaginations, allowing the sounds of the instruments to suggest new stories and songs

Involvement/Wellbeing/PSE

Observations: many children moved to act spontaneously – boosted confidence for those who don’t normally participate in group activities (rbw); children expressing their own ideas, gaining confidence (mpl); good at copying and taking turns (mpl); children contributing own ideas for voice and body sounds (mpl);

Children’s enjoyment and delight in discovering new sounds clearly shows that music making at this age needs to allow for children to explore what their voice can do and what sounds they can make. The confidence to develop their own songs is helped by giving children something familiar to work with; for example a familiar tune to which they put their own words.
1.3 cont Express own ideas and work together

Observations: Children work together to make a story about a lion and a cow (gwy); George flaps his arms up and down to create wings. Ava suggests a movement for the snow and waves her arms up and down; Josie identified different sounds including the woodpecker, she put up her hand to say she’d seen a nest (gwy); children spontaneously make movements for the bluebird song (ath);

Outcomes

Children came up with movement ideas or responses in relation to the songs actions
Children worked together to develop creative ideas
Children make connections with other experiences

Involvement/ Wellbeing/ PSE

Relaxation sparks imagination for some (ath); enjoyed journeys, using imagination (ath); ongoing good relationships with adults and peer (rbw); form relationships with children they don’t usually work with (mpl); work as a group; no scope for independence (rbw);

At the project end staff reflected on the fine line between directed and self directed activity. They recognised that all music making requires a degree of modeling and learning skills before one can truly experiment.

Some staff felt that there were limited opportunities for children to work independently. The observations however clearly describe opportunities for children to develop their own ideas individually, and with others. There is a strong set of evidence about children putting movements to songs. This comes across as a powerful tool to develop imaginations and provide a creative response to music.
EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS

OUTCOME: to increase skills and enjoyment of early years practitioners and support them to deliver high quality music making

INDICATOR

- increased skills and confidence to lead music making activity
- increased understanding of what makes good music making

Practitioners worked alongside Kate for 4 weeks, sometimes more. Each day finished with a debrief and review of the session. They used an observation grid to capture observations on children's music making and involvement and well being. All led an activity in their final week and had the opportunity to run it twice over and review with Kate. Sue, the trainee, supported Kate for most of the project, working in all four settings. The project also allowed for each setting to access one CPD session for their whole team.

Increased skills and confidence to lead music making activity

Confidence to lead: All staff led an activity, the scale of which depended on practitioner's confidence. One person brought in a whole set of kitchen pots and pans and led the whole session. Practitioners say they are more confident to lead activities because children are less judgmental.

Hayley led well; confident singing and took opportunities to follow children’s lead. She developed time for creative exploration and copying further with the second group following Kate’s suggestions. (gwy)

Skills to lead: Staff remark on the success of getting children to make new songs to familiar tunes; We have adapted the tunes of the songs to help at story time and with tidy up (the children are really engaged)! (gwy)

Already we are continuing to use the songs we have learnt at group time but have also adapted tunes into songs to meet children’s learning. E.g at lunch time we sing “thank you everybody, thank you everybody, it’s nearly time to wash our hands and eat up all our lunch” (gwy).

Staff identify the need to ‘keep things simple’ and not use every instrument in the box. Less material – to give children more chance to experiment. (manager, rbw)

Staff reflect on combining instrument playing and singing. Practicing the songs first was successful and then introducing instruments once the children gained familiarity with the songs (gwy)
Many skills are transferable - the hello song, the feelings puppets and the use of recording all support children’s speech, language and communication development.

Increased understanding of what makes good music making

Music qualities: The quality of observations each week show practitioners are familiar with musical terms and using them with confidence.

Instruments: Staff note the quality of the instruments; and their tactile qualities - they aren’t plastic. They appreciate limiting the range of instruments to particular families. Some settings now store their instruments in this way.

Space/Environment: There is significant learning about what makes a good space for music making; limited distractions, a defined space (such as the magic carpet). *All active because the space they had was too big; next week work better in confined space of the gazebo (rbw).*

The circle: Staff comment the focus achieved through working in a circle. *Work on clear focus of direction, looking at music leader (some children have not been focused).*

Role of music leader: Some are unsure about how and when to intervene and when to step back; striking the right balance between open ended and directed activity. Greenway reflects on ‘the importance of the adult role to give a focus and ability to role model how you use instruments’.

Group make up: Some settings felt it helpful after the first week or two to divide the group either around developmental ages (3 and 4 yr olds), or around levels of confidence. In mixed age groups older children model activities for the younger ones.

Tempo: Staff reflect on the pace of music making sessions and learn from Kate the value in bursts of activity followed by using music/song to instil moments of calm and relaxation.

Recording: The success of the recording, and the opportunities for children to discover their own voice, has encouraged teams to think about using recording regularly in their early years practice.
PARENTS

OUTCOME

Increase parental involvement in music making with children as a way to promote well being

INDICATOR

- Attendance and participation in sessions,
- Awareness about links between music and well being

This aspect of the project was recognised as a potential area of difficulty from the beginning. Each setting was invited to think carefully about strategies to involve parents. Parents were invited to join in sessions and posters were put up in the nurseries to communicate what was going on. At the midpoint review, there were no real models of success. Efforts were then put into a celebration event for families at the end of the project. Every child also had a CD recording to take home.

Attendance at Sessions

Parents were reluctant to get involved in sessions. This may be simply that they expect to leave children at nursery and not stay. Some managers thought parents were fearful about getting involved, not knowing what to expect. One strategy was to invite in parents that played musical instruments.

Few parents came to the celebration events. It worked best when they had heard the CD and this acted as a prompt to attend. At Maplehurst they made certificates and parents were proud of their children’s achievements.

Awareness about links between music and well being

Many parents were however positive about the project when they picked up their children. They reported on children singing songs at home. Kenny has really enjoyed learning new songs and knows a lot of instrument names now. Every Thursday night his Daddy asks what songs he has learnt and he takes great pride in singing them.

Athelstan reported that parents were aware of benefits of relaxation/sleep and thought that the relaxation sessions helped children sleep better at home.

The value of the project has been beneficial to families because they have learnt the importance of music. They have learnt new songs and this has enabled the development of their children’s language. (manager, gwy)

Looking back, nursery managers felt more could have been made of the CD recording to encourage parental involvement. The difficulties here have prompted the Children’s Centres to make parental engagement the focus of a future project.
CONCLUSIONS

Music making:
Staff learnt a range of useful strategies to lead music making in early years settings. These included:

- making music out of anything
- taking turns
- copying and mirroring
- directing music: stop/start; fast/slow
- building rhythm patterns
- playing instruments in unusual ways
- exploring different sound worlds
- making new songs to familiar tunes
- using recording equipment
- using quality instruments
- music and story for relaxation
- creating the right environment
- working with small groups of up to 10 children

The individual tracking records levels of involvement ranging from 3 to 5 out of 5 on the Leuven scale. Those that start at 3 generally become more involved over subsequent weeks.

EYFS references the following in terms of developing children’s personal, social and emotional development. We saw each manifest through aspects of the music making project.

positive sense of themselves and of others | confidence in own abilities to make music and discover own voice

respect for others | ability to work in group, share ideas, take turns, copy and learn from each other

social skills | share fairly, work as a group, sing and play together

positive disposition to learn | children focused, motivated and engaged

Personal, social and emotional development
The links between music and well being were clearly demonstrated throughout the project through the observations made during the sessions and through the use of the Leuven scale to track specific children. The children selected were on the whole those with specific learning needs.

Early Years Practitioners Skills and Development
A key aim for the project was around developing confidence of early years practitioners to lead music making. On the whole those practitioners who took part had an interest and
confidence in leading music activity. Some managers felt 4 weeks was not long enough for practitioners to learn new skills. They suggested involving 2 over 8 weeks and for them to cascade skills to the rest of the team.

Managers also reflected on the fact that some people don’t feel comfortable leading music activities and you can’t force it. Negative perceptions of one’s own musicality can be developed at an early age and are hard to change.

Nevertheless there was key learning about strategies for CPD that emerged through this project:

- The mentoring model, learning alongside a professional over a period of time, was a successful strategy. It allowed the practitioner time to observe the lead musician in action and develop their own skills alongside.

- Some settings experienced difficulties engaging the rest of the staff in their setting. CPD sessions where they have happened have helped to build broader interest and support, developing an appetite and confidence for music making at an organisation level.

- The quality of reflection built into the project resulted in significant learning for the early years practitioners and for the programme.

- The project was possibly over ambitious in the range of tools used for reflection/evaluation. Practitioners have limited time and capacity which needs to be used carefully.

- Making time for CPD is difficult in early years settings. This project built in time and money to enable CPD sessions to happen.

- Each early years setting has its own culture and time is also needed for an external visitor to understand this.

Parents try out the thumb harp