



**YOUTH
MUSIC**



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

MOPS Take 2

Music Matters @ MOPS - Spring Term 2022

KEY

ML: Music Leader

LS: Little Star Group Music Sessions

KW: Key Worker

The Term 4 report 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.

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

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

Instrumental training for the MOPS team took place this term face to face. The team had one instrumental training session with a further two sessions to be held in the Summer Term. This term we explored musical storytelling with instruments for the MOPS team.

OUTCOME 1 - PERSONAL

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

The children had the opportunity this term to attend a live music concert at the playgroup provided by Singing Hands.

Saturday 26th February: Singing Hands - "We are Suzanne and Tracy and we would like to introduce you to the amazing world of signing with Makaton. Our unique and enthusiastic approach is designed to help develop someone's communication potential through music, songs, games & activities. We focus on learning language in a way that is motivating, engaging and most of all, fun!"

This concert was MOPS first since the pandemic and was held on a Saturday with families and friends of MOPS. 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 regally 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 the MOPS facebook page. See link below.

[Singing Hands](#)

We were also able to hold our third sharing concert with families, friends and the MOPS children and team. It was great to see all the parents supporting their children with singing, signing and using their instruments with songs they had been learning across the term.

Photo's from the sharing concert can be seen by clicking the link below.

[Sharing Concert](#)

Below are two examples of children engaging in musical experiences at MOPS.

[S Singing](#)

[Y Playing the piano](#)

Observations from Group & Music Therapy Sessions for Y, J and S

Observations in Term 4 focussed on how the children responded in group sessions and 1-1 and what affect this had on their overall progress in communicative responses, social interactions and musical learning. These observations highlight differences as well as similarities in the ML's adaptive approaches to engaging the children and supporting their varying needs.

The observations focus on 3 children with different needs; Autism, Downs Syndrome and Global Developmental Delay. Through continuous work with the 3 children it became clear that;

- Y needs to hear her name and be given constant encouragement to ensure she understands that it is ok for her to participate however she wishes and that all responses are musical and will be acknowledged and celebrated.
- J needs to be allowed to bring in his props/toys to 1-1 and group music and be supported by the ML to incorporate his props/toys in some way into the session so he can participate freely.
- S needs time and space to release his excitement and energy.

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.

VIGNETTE 2 - Child: J
ML Observations

J came over as soon as I came in today. He was very eager and asked me to sit down and start music. J had a toy Elephant, Pig, Lion and Dinosaur with him today. I am often led by J as this is the best way to draw out musical responses.

We sang hello J and then I pointed to each of his animals and he sang in pitch their name. We did this a few times. He then instinctively started singing 'Old McDonald'. So we lined up his animals and got the drum. We sang the order in which his animals were lined up and he responded by singing most of the song with all the animal names, their sounds and by tapping the drum with their sound. We did this for all animals and by the end he was signing the song independently with me just filling in some gaps.

We then lined up the animals again and I asked J which animal had gone to sleep. I put the elephant on it's side and said shhh. He lifted the elephant back up again, we repeated this a few times. I then started playing and singing sleeping bunnies (elephant). J soon got the hang of the musical game and laid down each animal for the 1st part of the song and then made them jump up for the 2nd part of the song. Great understanding of different sections of the song, phrasing, dynamics and musical cues.

I played a simple tune on the guitar and started a game using the microphone and pointing to each animal in turn. J sang mostly babble words for the most part but he always sang the names of the animals and sounds when they were pointed to.

I then placed the Lion on the yellow rectangle on the mat. J then put the red dinosaur on the red section, the grey elephant on the blue (closest he could find to grey) and the pink pig on the purple section. He then ran off. I knew that not all the colours on the mat had an animal so I guessed he was going to get more to fill in the gaps. Sure enough he came back with a turtle which we put on the green. We then sang a simple tune of 'The dinosaur is red red red'. J picked up the animals one by one singing the name of the animal and colour. I left gaps for the colour and Jeff matched them exactly. Fantastic singing and comprehension J!

In group sessions J often brings toys with him. By incorporating these toys in some way during the session J can stay for longer and interact with his peers. His peers are often interested in J's input and equally like to watch a penguin bounce on a drum or a lion bounce on the parachute.

VIGNETTE 3 - Child: S ML Observations

S always seeks me out when I come into playgroup. He runs over to the music therapy / group music area every week and signs and says hello. He is excited and pleased to see me and wants to sit down and join in with music even when it's not his music therapy day or group music will not start for another 15mins.

S in group sessions is very active. He likes to make sounds, shout out, plays instruments with vigour and always gets up to dance and move around the space. He sometimes gets over stimulated and his key worker has to brush his arms to ground him.

He often connects with his peers by looking at them or shaking his instrument at or near them. He often directs his singing/signing to his friends and also interacts with his key worker. He at times throws his instruments which appears to be a release of his excitement and energy rather than a deliberate act.

During a 1-1 music therapy session we played the cymbal. S immediately laughs and giggles and thinks this instrument is hilarious! I make the sign LOUD and he crashes the cymbal very loudly. He laughs and says 'loud' and signs loud too. We repeat this many times and his enjoyment increases each time. I then sign QUIET and he taps the cymbal quietly. S understands the difference between loud and quiet but can not wait to get to the crash LOUD. His anticipation builds until he can hold it in no more and crashes loudly. The laughter starts once more. It was wonderful to see this interaction, his excitement and joy but also his musical understanding.

Using the Sounds of Intent Framework music leaders & MOPS staff will document individual communicative responses and engagement and track how children interact/progress/learn in a group setting and how this effects them individually.

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.

Responses

- Reactive responses - Y reactive responses are largely at level 5 and consistent
- Proactive - Y proactive responses are between 2-3 consistently
- Interactive - Y Interactive responses vary depending on the activity

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

Brass Band Concert

Y was enthralled by the brass band from the first note. She engaged physically by how she held herself. Her enjoyment of the music was clear to see and she was excited when taken closer to the door to watch them play.

Playgroup Sessions

During our story 'I am the music man' when Y heard the line 'I play the drum' she started to strike her tray like a drum.

Y was in the bathroom and heard 'Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' being sung. She became still and listened and then kept smiling as the song was sung from the main hall.

During group singing Y heard 'Happy & You Know It' and started to be sing and reacted with a squeak, a smile and drawing up her arms and legs. She stayed engaged with the song and for the shout 'We Are!' she opened her mouth as if to vocalise.

Music Therapy

Music therapy was in a quiet hall as the others had gone to the park. Y was really focussed on her session, lots of eye contact and reaching for instruments to strike as well as feel the vibration. She remained focussed on the session even when the group returned and noise got greater.

During Music Therapy Y joined in with the Hello song, saying 'hello' at breaks in the song at the appropriate time x 7 times.

Group Music

During Hey Ya song there was a delay in response but Y brought her hands up, vocalised 'ya' then banged her hands on the floor which was the order/actions ML had done.

Fish Song - Y became still to listen to the shaker sound and as ML sung, she tracked ML and the fish prop half way around the circle.

Y became increasingly vocal and smiled more and more as the session progressed - particularly with familiar songs.

Sing and Sign

When ML sang 'If you're tired go to sleep'. Y had been trying to go to sleep so when she heard this she smiled, vocalised and closed her eyes again.

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

It was wonderful to have all the families together once more for our second live sharing concert. This term Sing and Sign and Little Star jointly presented songs and activities to the families and the children. The children are always delighted to have their families with them at sharing concerts and other performances. Most children seem to present similar responses at sharing concerts as they do in group / 1-1 music sessions, however some children's responses are heightened due to excitement and others want to sit and listen and be comforted by mum, dad or carer. All responses are valued and participation celebrated as the children express themselves in ways they feel most comfortable.

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

Parent comments:

“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.”

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

Weekly observations and written notes have been documented throughout Term 4 by the KW's. Some examples relating to Child S and Child Y as discussed earlier in the report are noted below. MOPS team have also reflected on their own practice for the Rainbow Singing session and also musical storytelling with instruments which they started to develop in training.

VIGNETTE 4
Observations from MOPS Team - Child S and Child Y

Child S

Obv 1 - S really enjoys singing through play to engage in activities such as splish splash outside and jumping up and down to the beat. He also asks to sing 'Wheels on the Bus; and likes it when the lyrics are personalised to him for example 'S is on the bus and he says hi' and likes to bang something to the beat. If musical instruments are out, at some point during the session, S will usually go over and play with them. He especially likes to hit the drums if they are out.

Obv 2 - S likes to join in with our singing sessions, he knows the nursery rhymes and will sing key words of the songs. He is often keen to dance and be up from his chair to join in. He is very familiar with the songs from sing and sign and in particular likes the part when Jessie cat is brought out of the box, although he can be impatient and try to get Jessie out before it is time.

Child Y

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. 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.

Rainbow Sessions led by MOPS team

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.

During Term 4 we explored different ways of bringing out the musical skills of the MOP's workforce. We held 1 training session where 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. We will discuss the results of this in Term 5.

CONCLUSION

Term 4 of MOPS Take 2 presents a consistent progression in musical achievement and learning for the children and staff at MOPS. 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. 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.

Term 4 also provides further 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.

Term 4 provides feedback from MOPS staff, ML's as well as from families in an informal format during the sharing concert. Family feedback extends our understanding of the children's musical responses and provides a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the children's musical achievements. In Term 4 we hear about the continuation of musical enjoyment and exploration at home and the wider impact music can have on the children at MOPS. This feedback is so important and it is wonderful that opportunities such as the sharing concerts are able to facilitate these discussions.

In Term 4 we also see the return of the Rainbow Sessions ran by the MOPS Team, and staff feedback highlights the engagement and enjoyment of both the children and staff during these sessions. The MOPS Team training in Term 4 focused on scaffolding learning, building on previous skills as well as familiar songs and activities which are often explored with the children throughout the day. It also extended musical learning in areas such as music terminology and instrumental skills as well as ways of incorporating musical play into other elements of learning such as storytelling.

Despite continued COVID restrictions, music remains a clear priority for the playgroup, reflected in the projects many elements, which provide connected and consistent music experiences across many areas. These experiences include musical activities and sessions occurring during the daily activities of the children at MOPS, the projects music sessions and concerts, and the musical explorations of the children in the home environment. Combined, these experiences offer multiple opportunities for the children to participate and engage in ways appropriate to their needs, and succeed in their musical explorations with support, acknowledgement and fun.