

CAMHS Project Report

**SEN/D Music Programme delivered at Springwell Sure Start
Centre/Springwell School and Cedar School**



1. Overview of Project

1.1 Overall Aim

Our programme at Springwell and Cedar Schools in Southampton has seen us deliver a series of weekly one-to-one and group music-making sessions during school time, but out of main curriculum delivery. The sessions were planned and reviewed on the basis of the individual participants' Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP or EHC) or the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) assessments. The overall aim of the sessions was to contribute to participants' emotional well-being through structured sessions and free play, encouraging positive interaction, confidence-building, communication and self-awareness/confidence. Our programme aimed to also leave a legacy of good music practice in each setting, through the delivery of formal training sessions, informal coaching and knowledge-exchange. Evaluation has been carried out based on the qualitative and quantitative data derived from student feedback in relation to EHCP statements, the teachers' reviewing of participants EYFS and meetings with staff members.

1.2 Settings

The project saw music interventions take place at Springwell School and Cedar School. Springwell is a primary school for children aged 4 – 11 years with complex learning difficulties. All our children have a severe level of learning difficulties and many have associated disabilities such as autism, speech and language disorders and challenging behaviour. Every child within the School has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Cedar School is a school for children who have complex Special Educational Needs and Physical Difficulties (SEND) that results in the need for a different approach to their education.

1.3 Session Structure

Two interventions, which included group and one-to-one sessions, were delivered simultaneously throughout each school term, totalling six interventions across three terms. The project started on the Summer term 2017; the sessions started smoothly as they followed through previous projects run by SoCo in most of the settings. More information about session structure is detailed in the Group Sessions and One-to-one Sessions below.

1.4 Participants

Altogether 45 children have taken part in our programme:

Springwell Early Years - 16 participants aged between 4 and 5, with 7 girls and 9 boys

Springwell Primary - 7 participants aged between 7 and 8, with 1 girl and 6 boys

Cedar School: 22 participants aged between between 8 and 11, with 9 girls and 13 boys

Total: 45: 27 girls and 28 boys

The grouping of participants and relationship with collaborators were shaped by the needs, organisational practices and schedules of each school. For ease of reference, I have referred to to the sessions as Springwell (SP), Springwell Early Years 1 and 2 (SEY1, SEY2), and Cedar 1, 2 and 3 (C1, etc). The SP sessions included the totality of a Year 2 class. The group sessions took place in

the main classroom, whereas the 1:1 sessions were run in sensory rooms or other non-class activity rooms. SEY1 and SEY2 were attended by a larger groups of students, so not all of them could take part in the project.

Participants were chosen in consultation with teachers, and both one-to-one and group sessions took place in separated activity rooms. The situation at Cedar school was different as it was suggested by their music coordinator, Becca Farewell, that we should choose students from PMLD-specialist classes, or individuals with complex behavioural needs from different classes. For this reason, in group sessions we did not work with specific classes as a unit, but with children from different classes working as a group. This presented no difficulties as it was possible to implement the existing grouping frameworks that were in place during lunchtime sessions. All sessions took place in the music room, with the exception of a one-to-one sessions, which for different reasons took place in the main classroom. The group sessions were organised as a part of the lunchtime sessions.

2. Planning

At the heart of planning and delivery of our music interventions was the utilisation of shared framework. These enabled us to think about our delivery in relation to the needs and priorities identified by teachers and carers as well as ensuring that evaluation contributed to shared objectives. The assessment of the impact of our music interventions was a collaborative effort between teachers, carers and music leader

2.1 EYFS Guidelines (Springwell)

The planning and evaluation framework relevant to the Springwell Early Years music sessions was based on EYFS guidance materials produced by the British Association for Early Childhood Education

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

This provided us with a model for effective learning, the guidelines' progression ark distinguishes three prime areas and four specific areas of learning and development. Assessment and progression is gauged in relation to children's relationship to the statements specified for different age groups. The learning statements can be associated to a child's development as a behaviour that is emerging, developing or secure.

For our music interventions we used as a core reference the first prime area, which is 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development'. It's three core aspects are: 'making relationships', 'self-confidence and self-awareness' and 'managing feelings and behaviour'. In addition to this, we used, as secondary references, aspects from 'Physical Development', 'Communication and Language' as well as aspects from the Specific Areas 'Understanding the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design'.

Evidence collected from the music sessions has been uploaded to the school's Tapestry sharing system, which allows for the inclusion of footage and commentary alongside the outline of the

children's learning progression in relation to the Areas of Learning and Development. This tracking of individual progression has been useful for our own reporting, but also the Springwell Early Years unit's evaluation systems. When teachers complete reassessments of children's goals and achievements, the data from the music sessions will be integrated into that assessment and at the end of the project we will discuss how the music sessions contributed to the children's progress, which will inform the final report giving contextualisation in relation to schools' own assessment of children's progress.

2.2 EHCP (or EHC) Assessments

EHCP Assessments are issued by local authorities on the basis of information provided by schools, parents, carers, the young person, health care professionals, social services and educational psychologists. Even though they don't have a set template they include features outlined in Chapter 9 of the SEND Code of Practice.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

For our music interventions the EHCP features that were considered relevant for planning and delivery were those that addressed communication and interaction, cognition and learning, interests and aspirations, communicational skills and interaction, emotional wellbeing, sensory and physical development. Our delivery, whether in one-to-one or group sessions, focussed on one or more of these development areas, based on initial consultation and ongoing feedback.

3. Delivery

3.1 One-to-one Sessions

Most one-to-one sessions were child-led. Different interactive activities and play routines were developed from the participants' initial interests and responses to different sound devices (instruments or technology) or musical sounds that were introduced by the music leader. Following initial feedback, more specific activities were designed in consultation with teachers, teaching assistants or EHCP assessments. One-to-one sessions have offered the unique opportunity for children to express themselves, interact and explore without the restrictions that might exist of class/group settings. This was particularly useful for children whose interactive routines involved a lot of movement, running or using sound devices (technology and instruments) in unusual ways.

These sessions also afforded a useful opening for children with advanced verbal skills but with problems using speech to communicate their needs or feelings. These children have struggled to respond to the more prescriptive nature of group activities as they haven't had the chance to develop contact moments with staff based on movement, vocal utterances or sensory routines. We have found these contact moments to be key in our music interventions, with them being based on the practice of intensive interaction, psychodynamic improvisation and a constructivist approach to play and learning.

3.2 Group Sessions

The nature of group dynamics required a more structured approach to musical interventions. It was necessary for these to be designed taking into consideration some of the key challenges that were identified in the children's EHCP. Our group sessions focussed on developing group awareness, cooperation, turn-taking, narratives, spontaneous creativity, sensory-motor challenges, choosing and following schedules. These sessions also focussed on music as a shared social and sensory experience, that goes above and beyond specific technical/academic targets of the music curriculum.

4. Legacy

Our programme had weaved throughout it a series of reflective sessions and training. Reflective sessions generally took place at the end of the school day, or in-between sessions. These were used for individual coaching as well as knowledge exchange. Formal training sessions were arranged separately, with a couple to still take place towards the end of the project.

4.1 Coaching

At the heart of this programme has been our aim to empower teachers and teaching assistants to include more music-making in their interventions. Through coaching sessions we have introduced basic music and workshop skills to improve teachers' confidence and skills. It has been heartening to see that even a basic level of musical skill has been sufficient for teachers to feel remarkably more confident about using music in group and one-to-one sessions. It has been exciting to develop practical and conceptual links between our approach to individual music sessions and their school staff's own intensive interaction practices.

Consequently, we have developed a musical training framework which includes how music technology and instruments, singing and activities can be integrated using the same intensive interaction approaches, with which they are already familiar and skilled at using. These also include a series of group-session templates, based on workshop leading models that provide possible session structures with a variety of musical instruments and the different ways that they can be used. It was necessary for us to challenge preconceptions around staff feeling that they weren't 'musical' or that they didn't possess musical skills and we encouraged them to think of making musical sounds as a means of initiation, support and reflection in addition to showing them how to use guitar open tunings, overtone flutes and drums. These coaching sessions have directly supported an increase in skills of 10 staff in both settings.

4.2 Training

Our original aspirations were for training to take place within the reflective sessions or during staff meetings. It has been gratifying that the schools' interest in the our programme has translated into specially scheduled CPD sessions. At the Springwell settings, all members of staff were encouraged to attend two CPD sessions. At Cedar School, we will be delivering training sessions on music facilitation for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These training sessions will have included 28 members of staff in Springwell and will include 8 members of staff at Cedar.

4.3 Knowledge Transfer

To embed a legacy of our music interventions we have tried to ensure that music interventions continue to be delivered once our supported interventions were over. To achieve this, where possible, we have had a period of transition in which members of staff have started to lead sessions, supported by our music leader. Teachers at Springwell were particularly interested in taking over the leadership role of one-to-one sessions, as these were less familiar to them than the group management strategies used in group sessions, with which they were generally very familiar. At Cedar, we have seen some staff members leading one-to-one sessions and taking part in group sessions with improved facilitation skills that demonstrate heightened initiative and skills to support children without having to follow the guidance of our music leader.

5. Evaluation

It's important to note that as we haven't reached the end of the project, a full analysis and evaluation hasn't been possible, as we need to assess and reflect on progress of our participants in relation to the EHCP and EYFS targets that were mentioned previously.

5.1 Staff Feedback

Class 2 (Springwell) - One-to-one Sessions

Hannah, Class 2 teacher during the 2017 Summer Term, emphasized that having the chance to observe and gradually participate in sessions was essential to her understanding of how music could support the development of her children. After observing and participating in these, Hannah was impressed at how the child-led approach was enabling children to understand contents freely and make relationships between them. With the flow of interactive sessions, she saw how children would quote stories, count, or bring up class topics as part of vocal interactions, spontaneous song-making or drumming. She stressed that this was particularly important to her as children were not prompted to receive knowledge, they were using it spontaneously in a different context.

Rainbow 1 (Springwell, Start Point) - Group Sessions

Clare, who is the teacher at the EYS at Springwell has observed that the group sessions have enabled interactions and social dynamics, which are less likely to occur within the larger classroom settings. This is particularly the case of children that were either passive in class, or children who usually struggled to wait for things to happen, or for the staff to engage and work with them. Our sessions have provided a smaller-scale structured approach, with a stronger emphasis on individual contributions (easier to achieve in a group of 4 rather than a group of 13!!). This has directly had a positive impact on children's social engagement in play. An example of this was of one of the children, who was generally passive and sedentary, was confidently moving, role-playing and taking the initiative in music sessions. Observing and learning from Ignacio through the sessions has given Clare the confidence to replicate and employ similar engagement techniques to support increased engagement of the children.

Purple Class (Cedar) - One-to-one Sessions

Amber, a teaching assistant, was involved from the start in a series of one-to-one sessions with student Ch. Ch could be very resistant to interact or even look at individuals that she did not know. Amber joined in with Ch's preparatory and first session and she was very surprised to notice that Ch was accepting to come into the music room on her own. Ch had started to talk about the music sessions in class, and was looking forward to them. Amber then joined in a later session, so that we were able to develop a continuation strategy, and remarked that she was surprised to see how comfortable Ch was around the music leader and how engaged she was with all the activities. Ch's confidence to interact socially with people that she didn't know has grown and she is able to give objects of greet people that she hasn't seen before. Amber suggested that this was a direct outcome of the very strong emphasis on communication, interaction and verbal communication that the one-to-one sessions have had.

Lunchtime Group Session (Cedar) - Group Sessions

Before we decided to organise group music sessions as part of the schools' lunchtime routines, children used to watch films or listen to songs from YouTube. Even though they enjoyed this activity, they were for the most part passive. Lunchtime staff, who usually performed care and support duties (rather than teaching assistance) were in charge of those sessions, and were our music leaders collaborators during group sessions. The two main support staff, Debby and Gloria, were impressed at how responsive all the students were when the right sound device was given to them, and they were appropriately encouraged, through a combination of supportive playing and prompting. After a year, they have both become more confident and have started to take the initiative in group sessions, and recommend new ways in which students can engage with different sound devices, or how conventional instruments could be adapted to be used by participants with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Head-teacher Jonathan expressed surprise at how positive the lunch-time staff were about these sessions, and how pleased they were to take part in them.

5.2 Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Class 2, Summer term 2017, Group Session, Springwell School

Student W had highly developed verbal skills and was one of the most cognitively advanced students in his class. As was noted in his EHCP, his verbal skills not always translated in a capacity or willingness to express feelings or needs to others. W also found it difficult to focus on activities that were not of his choosing and could become unsettled when he was asked to turn-take or cooperate with another student. Teacher Hannah had developed behavioural strategies for W to learn how to control his mood and become calm after a disappointing experience.

Working in a group setting where many activities relied on turn-taking, or accepting choices made by others, W generally needed a 'reward role' within a group activity that he could work towards. This was generally the possibility to lead the whole group, or to have a very active input in the composition of musical narratives. However, as W adapted to different structured activities, we increased the challenge by including sound devices that we knew W found particularly hard to share. This led to several instances in which W removed himself from the group and had to go through the calming routing with the teacher. However, Hannah was surprised that after a few minutes, W started to come back to the session, which was relatively unusual. Toward the end of

the term, the reward-system was very smooth and W was able to tolerate longer turn-taking waiting periods, while remaining verbally engaged. In the last three sessions, W could stay in the session throughout. W's capacity to tolerate other people's choices, or waiting periods, was a key area of emotional and social learning; the group music sessions tackled this area directly and encouraged adaptive behaviours consistently over a full term.

Case Study 2 – Red Class (Year 1), Summer Term 2017, One-to-One session, Cedar School

The Cedar School head-teacher Jonathan was particularly eager for student D to be included in the CAMHS project, as he considered him to have one of the most complex behavioural needs of the whole school. Engaging with D was challenging as he found it difficult to control bursts of aggressive or inappropriate behaviour, which seemed to occur for no reason; he also had severe difficulty to initiate or respond to interactions. He therefore rarely played with other students, and teacher Steph emphasised that for the moment their focus was on generating positive adult engagement. At the time when the sessions started, there was no official diagnosis; towards the end of the sessions, following a student review, we were informed that D had an uncommon disorder known as Reactive Attachment Disorder. It was considered that RAD was the cause of his difficulty to relate to other people, as individuals with RAD had severely disturbed models of relationships. D also had severe learning difficulties and was non-verbal.

The one-to-one sessions happened in an area within the school's backyard. D had a small playhouse where he usually sat or laid on his own, when he found the company of other children difficult to tolerate. The sessions involved vocal interactions, as D regularly vocalized on his own from inside the playhouse, drumming, and two-part playing. Two part-playing occurs when one person hold and instrument and the other plays it, or in some way both play it. We evaluated the progression of the sessions according how many times D left his play house to look at the music leader (Ignacio), approach Ignacio, or play with Ignacio. For the first 3 weeks he clearly responded to vocal interaction but only looked at me through the playhouse's window. Towards the end of the first half term D started to leave the playhouse and approached Ignacio . Ignacio used a large hand drum which he could have between him and D. Even though D generally attempted to play or scratch the drum, he sometimes tried to pinch Ignacio's eyes, which was easily redirected by pretending that the aim of that action had been to play the drum. A combination of redirecting negative behaviours and two-part playing slowly provided a clear framework for interaction, and D started to leave his playhouse as soon as Ignacio approached the backyard with the drum (Ignacio usually announced himself with drum-talk). D eventually started to run stretching his hand towards Ignacio, which led into a new activity based on quick sprints triggered. Towards the end of the project, there were five different play routines that D engaged with and looked forwards to, yet these positive contact moments remained confined to these sessions. D also responded well to different behaviour strategies used by teachers. After the intervention finished, D had a new teacher, with whom Ignacio has introduced to these activities and the general approach.

Case Study 3 – Rainbow 2 (Reception), Autumn Term 2017, One-to-One Session, Springwell (Sure Start)

As with every other participant attending Reception units, the session addressed the three core aspects of Personal, Social and Emotional Development: making relationships, self-confidence and self awareness and managing feelings and behaviour. For student A, music sessions also addressed the 'moving and handling' section of 'Physical Development'. The best fit bands for these areas were within the 8-20 months for making relationships and self-awareness, 0-11 months for managing feelings, and 16-26 months for manual handling. By the end of the project, there will be quantitative data developed from A's summative assessment, which will be cross-references to

the teacher's assessment of how influential music sessions were in the progress gauged by the student. The following is a qualitative description of A's progress in the sessions.

A's interactions with others and exploring new situations was at a 'developing stage', he could build relationships with special people and could draw them into interaction. This sometimes included the request of preferred objects, with showing little tolerance for unexpected or different activities. A enjoyed dancing and jumping to music, but his handling of objects was at times fragile and lacking in confidence. At first it was challenging to encourage A to play cooperatively (16-26 month band), as he had a fixation with electronic gadgets. Any attempts to distract him from it would have had a negative effect on his interest to engage in interaction, as he would have repeatedly to switch on screens, computers, etc. We therefore decided to implement a positive reinforcement strategy. A could use an ipad application over a period of time after he had at least attempted to engage with a different sound device.

Feedback was generally fast paced and constant, so A remained focused and could handle temporary disappointment. It was possibly this fast-paced alternation between different applications and sound devices that motivated A to eventually imitate the makaton sign for 'different', which Ignacio had consistently used when he asked him what he wanted. Teacher Alex noticed that this was a new occurrence in A's communication patterns, and showed that he could ask for specific things in more sophisticated ways, and it was also consistent with general development in A's communication skills. Most importantly, it was clear that A really enjoyed holding large and small objects, particularly if his playing triggered strong feedback loops, but his fixation with ipads was too strong (strong enough to figure out the guided access password and force Ignacio to change it). Moreover, we noticed that even though A did use the different applications, the fixation was with the actual object. At the same time, we started to treat ipad play as a short reward for playing with instrument; it eventually became a trigger for long periods of instrumental playing. From engaging with one sound device (guitar), towards the end, A was using 4 in different combinations. Moreover, his grip had improved and he was able to produce louder sounds with a drum, while interacting vocally or dancing spontaneously.

The music sessions clearly contributed to the development of A's communication skills, his manual handling, as well as his capacity to sustain more cooperative interactions, following a consistent system of actions and rewards. The new summative EYFS assessments, in relation to and the teachers' feedback, confirm this.