

Approaches to Music Education

Raising Attainment/Ambitious and Confident Children

There are a number of projects developing across Scotland where music education is seen as a contributor to the achievement of key outcomes for children and their families, including raising attainment and improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Examples include:

1. [Big Noise Programme](#)

Big Noise is a music education and social change programme run by Sistema Scotland in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Stirling.

Big Noise uses the symphony orchestra as a community through which children gain an invaluable range of life skills and experiences.

The Big Noise programme is particularly focussed on early year's intervention and long term delivery, starting by working with children at nursery and Primary 1 & 2, gradually building on core skills such as listening, concentration, rhythm and teamwork whilst learning to play an instrument in a group. From Primary 3 onwards children and young people are supported through after school and holiday club music teaching, performance and social interaction.

An independent evaluation report by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health revealed that Big Noise in Torry (Aberdeen) has enhanced participants ability to learn in school as well as improve emotional wellbeing. A review carried out by Education Scotland also recognised that Big Noise is helping to improve the life chances of children.

2. Dundee Family Learning Project

The team in Dundee have considered the financial impact of the current music grade system for families and plan to create their own accreditation system so that qualifications up to the equivalent of Grade 3 don't have a cost for children and families. They are keen to build upon the close working relationships that they have developed with parents/carers over lockdown by providing a Family Learning approach to music instruction. They have identified a primary school to start a pilot project where a family member will be provided with an instrument and will work towards a free grade assessment with their child.

3. Larbert High School, Falkirk

Larbert High School, Falkirk, have created an introductory programme for families, addressing the perception that learning around music was not accessible or tailored for all. Families were asked what they would like to cover and gain from the sessions. They looked at what music is and what some of the stereotypes can be. They have five families who participated in the four sessions, including a focus on the link between music and emotions/memories, how music can be of benefit to young people/parents and an introduction to music concepts. They are planning to build on this project for young people and families by expanding to include more families and developing a performance together.

4. Baby Strings, Glasgow

Baby Strings is a whole class string project for P1 to P4 pupils, delivered across four primary schools in Glasgow. The project was designed collaboratively with schools, pupils and families. The project was first developed in 2017 and funded through the Pupil Equity Fund. As well as aligning with the Pupil Equity Fund aims to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap, the project aims to bring the learning community together and provide an exciting and transformative experience for pupils and families. Class teachers are involved in Continuing Professional Development sessions and have been trained to deliver elements of the music sessions. The project has developed over the past four years, with increased opportunities to learn and perform. Pupils who wish to can further develop their skills through instruction with the Music Service.

The project has had a high level of engagement from pupils with pupils indicating that it improved their sense of wellbeing. Project partners have identified a range of benefits for the children involved, including improved listening and communication skills, goal setting, resilience and development of a growth mindset.

“For me, I think it is a transformative thing, the whole project” – Head Teacher