

Claire Wilson, Primary School of Music Lead, December 2024



### **What has been the impact of the Primary School of Music?**

Two years ago, and for the decade preceding, our music education was based around reliance on a music scheme of work and one box of instruments that only a handful of us realistically knew the names of. CPD in music was non-existent for teachers, indeed on my teacher training course, I, like many of my fellow teachers recall studying the music curriculum for one allocated afternoon. Like in many schools, music had become sidelined or squeezed out for subjects which were considered 'more academic.'

The potential for the power of music to transform, to inspire, to open minds and to open doors had not been fully explored here. Until now.

In 2024, the RBC entered our school with quite a literal fanfare. And since then, we- the children, the staff AND our local community have started a journey with music and begun to scratch the surface of where it can take us.

There were of course, some trepidations at first. For example, our children had not sung together as a real 'ensemble' for years... a decade maybe. For the older children the idea of singing collectively was initially met by some with some embarrassment and awkwardness. However, the more we practised, the more this was normalised and then embraced.

The playgrounds, which for many years were quiet of the clapping and singing games I remember so fondly of my youth, are coming alive with music once again. We introduced playground singing and clapping games to the children. We planted a seed and watched as it began to grow. Our children play, they sing, they collaborate, and they connect.

In their music lessons, children began to learn to read and write music. The way the concepts are broken down and presented means that they are accessible for all of our children. More than that though, our children are developing a myriad of other skills.

Come into our Reception music lessons and watch as the children use music as a vehicle to develop new vocabulary and to learn about sentence structure. I have a child who does not yet speak in full English sentences, but he can sing in them.

Come into our inclusion hub and watch as some of our children who are non-verbal use music as a means of communication and self-expression.



Come into some of our key stage 2 music lessons and watch how music gives some of our children a platform to shine, to succeed in a way that they had not necessarily experienced in the other areas of the curriculum.

Come into my classroom and you'll find a child with social and emotional needs who cannot yet maintain the focus to join the rest of the class on the carpet for whole class teaching. Yet in her music lesson she not only joins the rest of her class, but she participates too.

What we quickly realised is that these lessons don't just serve to upskill our children in their musical ability. They are an opportunity for personal growth too. Children are developing imagination and creativity. They are developing confidence to perform, to work as a team, to develop listening, attention, and cooperation skills.

They are learning about history, culture and geography. Music is also now beginning to thread through to other lessons to bring alive science, reading and poetry in the classroom.

Attitudes towards music began to shift. Music and musical talent are gaining its rightful place as something to be valued and celebrated. And what we are starting to create is a safe community where music and musical talent is celebrated. We have a growing uptake in our musical clubs, more entries to our talent shows, and more children willing to push themselves out of their comfort zone to perform with and in front of others. Their ambitions and aspirations are rising. These days, it's not uncommon to walk across the reception playground and hear them experimenting with a bit of opera.

Music is well and truly alive at St Benedict's and our children are at the beginning of their journey of musical discovery of where they want music to take them. They are developing their abilities and interests, finding out what they are good at and learning that we can try new things. They are developing their interpersonal skills, their communication, their ambition and their resilience. Best of all, and in the words of one of my reception class children "Music is so fun!"

