



The Dalla Project Evaluation Report



Authored and compiled by Ann Stott on behalf of Cornwall Music Service Trust (CMST) - September 2021

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Contents

Introduction	3
Cornwall Music Service Trust	3
Context	3
Overview	4
Aims	4
Objectives	4
The Project and COVID19	5
Methodology	6
Findings	7
Outcomes	7
The Composition and Digital Performance	9
Conclusion	10
Case Studies	13
Case Study 1 - Penryn Primary:	13
Child G.	13
Case Study 2 - Treverbyn Trailblazers:	14
Child E1	14
Case Study 3 - Truro Nursery School	15
Child A1	15
The Settings	20
Penryn Nursery	20
Treverbyn Trailblazers Nursery	20
Truro Nursery School	20
Biographies	22
Early Years Practitioners	22
Polly Barnicoat-Hall, Nursery Teacher at Penryn Primary Academy Nursery	22
Hayley James, Nursery Assistant at Treverbyn Trailblazers Nursery	22
Lucy Chamberlain, Class Teacher, Truro Nursery School	22
Early Years Music Facilitators	24
Emily Garrod	24
Jenny Crow	25
Sophie Orchard	26

Introduction

Cornwall Music Service Trust

Cornwall Music Service Trust (CMST) provides over 1000 hours of music education and music sessions to 10,000 people (including children and young people) a year in Cornwall, Isles of Scilly and some of Devon. Since our inception in 2015 we have been at the forefront of developing music with children and young people.

We are proud to have developed an inclusion branch to ensure equal and open access.

We run, support and facilitate a wide range of music activities. Examples include:

Large scale community performances such as the celebrating creativity concert at Dracena Centre.

Ensembles - We run and support area and county level ensembles and deliver to sell out concerts across Cornwall annually.

Direct instrumental and vocal teaching to children and young people.

Composition masterclasses - delivered by Gareth Churcher and Russell Pascoe, two eminent Cornish Composers who'll be working with Young composers in the inaugural David Frost Memorial Composers Competition 2019.

We supported the 2019 Cornwall International Male Choral Festival in live streaming events from Truro Cathedral, featuring international Choirs, to 30,000 viewers.

We facilitated and supported the festival's outreach project - choirs from Russia, South Africa and Lithuania working with children and young people from Cornwall. This project engaged with close to 1000 participants over two days.

We've worked collaboratively and in partnership with several partners including Bristol Plays Music, City of London Sinfonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Context

CMST's Early Years Music Education Service (EYMES) began delivering funded projects in 2017 and has subsequently developed the scope of it's work across Cornwall.

Our early years music work includes several action research projects in diverse settings across the county. These projects support Speech and Language development, Social and Emotional development and Motor skills. More information can be found [here](#)

We also provide 6 - 12 week projects to Early Years settings across the county supporting Early Years Practitioners in all areas of the EYFS.

Our excellence in early years music is nationally recognised and we have presented at national conferences.

Overview

The Dalla project was to demonstrate what can be achieved by 2 - 4 year olds musically, particularly with regard to improvisation and composition. Children were to have the opportunity to explore music in an improvised way and experiment with sound and use what they created to create something of their own. We wished to foster their improvisation and harness spontaneous expression to facilitate creation of collaborative compositions.

These compositions would be showcased and performed.

Musicians would work in 3 diverse early years settings using a range of musical activity: movement, pulse, rhythm and pitch work with and without instruments, singing etc. Children could express themselves musically and with confidence.

The musician and composer Ralph McTell supported the project. His well-loved and familiar children's classic Alphabet Zoo was used as an inspiration and to cite and use in the showcasing of the compositions.

Aims

To support 60 children to engage in artistic music activity and develop their musical skills and inner creative musician.

To increase the likelihood of children continuing to engage with music as they get older and supporting them to be happier and more musically able.

To increase parents support for their children's longer term engagement in musical activity and understanding of the value of this (Approx. 75 parents will be involved)

To inspire and inform others working with 2 – 4 year olds to ensure wider delivery of child led music projects focussing on children's innate musicality.

Objectives

- Working with new people
- Creating or commissioning new work
- Reaching new audiences
- Trying new approaches

The Project and COVID19

Delivery of the project began in January 2020 in three Early Years settings in Cornwall, Biscovey Nursery and Infants, Treverbyn Trailblazers and Penryn Primary by Sophie Andrews, Jenny Crow and Emily Garrod respectively, all Early Years Music Facilitators. The project was managed by Ann Stott, Early Years Music Lead. Each facilitator worked alongside a key member of the setting staff on a 1 to 1 basis but supported all setting staff to engage in the project.

Each setting received a 2 hour visit each week which consisted of sharing repertoire and musical activities, providing provocation for the children, observing their musical play and recording their musical improvisations and creations. We also provided time for 1 to 1 reflection with the key member of staff.

Each setting was to receive 20 weeks of delivery, however with the outbreak of a global pandemic our plans changed. By 20th March 2020 the settings had received 4 to 7 sessions each. It was at this point that we had to put the project on hold due to the first national lockdown.

During September 2020 the three settings involved in the project were contacted to plan a way forward in continuation of the project.

As the project had been suspended for many months and there were changes in children and staff in the settings we decided to restart the project from the beginning.



In order to do this we secured some funding from The James Sargent Early Years Music Education Trust.

The three settings were all offered a blended approach of face to face delivery and online support, including streaming, with a view that delivery would begin in the week beginning 2nd November 2020. Biscovey Nursery and Infants left the project due to staff changes and set up. However Truro Nursery School joined and we continued with a blended approach. Sophie streamed 6 sessions and the staff reflection to Truro Nursery School. Emily and Jenny delivered their sessions face to face.

A further national lockdown in January 2021 and uncertainty in the EY sector paused the delivery. However undeterred we provided PDF and Audio/Video resources to the settings

to keep the project alive, these were also distributed to those children not attending and their families. Our face to face delivery resumed in March 2021, completing in July 2021.

Methodology

We collected baseline data at the beginning of the project as to the children's musical receptiveness and music experiences and again at the end of the project. We also regularly measured the level of engagement and participation by children. This was done through completion of questionnaires by practitioners, in addition to observations and session recordings by staff and musicians. We measured the development of musical and other skills using the same methods.

The children were supported to feedback directly in a range of ways including verbal questions, use of pictures and observations of enjoyment/excitement levels etc.

The project plan was regularly reviewed and the evaluator supported those involved to share their observations and reflections, in order to shape the project to best meet its objectives and continually inform delivery.

Audiences were invited to give feedback on their enjoyment and responses to the piece through a link on the online recording. The number of online views was monitored and the number of attendees at performances were recorded.

Findings

Outcomes

This was the first time our Early Years Music Team had delivered a project to multiple settings. The Dalla Project team of three Early Years (EY) Musicians, Project Manager and EY practitioners in all the settings worked closely together. The EY Musicians and Project Manager held weekly meetings, via GoogleMeet/Zoom, to plan and review the project, this was not something we had done with prior EY projects. We found these weekly meetings enhanced the project development and we were able to adapt to the constantly changing circumstances caused by the global pandemic. For two of the EY Musicians, Dalla was their first EY project and they appreciated the support of team working.

Due to the pandemic we had to find new ways of working and supporting the EY practitioners and children. We developed resources specifically for the project which were shared with the settings and families involved. We became adept at creating PDF materials and accompanying audio files to share the repertoire we were using and suggest ideas for activities that settings and families might use. We created videos to demonstrate action songs and ideas for creating musical interactions in outdoor spaces and with found items in settings and the home.



We had hoped to engage with approx 75 parents to increase support for their children's longer term engagement in musical activity. Due to the COVID19 restrictions this was very difficult however 88 parents had access to our supporting resources via the settings.

"We used the CMST EY Music Sheets in lockdown. They helped M focus during tough times. M has come to love "Singing Day". She initially was very nervous and wouldn't share with us at home what she did. But now she likes to "teach us". It's the first thing she talks about on the day. She loved the saxophones."

As we were delivering much of the project remotely we relied on the EY Practitioners to deliver a weekly music session and give us as much feedback as they could. We had to ensure good lines of communication and support for all the setting staff involved. The EY Musicians worked closely with their setting staff throughout the project which created an ethos of positive teamwork.

Email replies from Lucy/Sera based on what they have been working on, based on the Dalla project:

“thank you for your lovely ideas,

We looked at a real nest last week and sang the bluebird song. The children are really enjoying changing the birds to different colours. We have been using ke la la as our goodbye song and enjoying 2 little dicky birds. We made a nest outside last week too.



Will try and send some sound snippets, obs and photos , “We have had the most wonderful morning with your 'Cuckoo, Cherry Tree' song! I am going to try and write some observations below and maybe even send some photos and videos.”

“We introduced the 2 little dicky birds last week, and continued our changing of the little blue bird songs to other coloured birds - their favourite is the rainbow bird! We then all took turns to look at a real nest.’

Making a nest

The EY Musicians all had to work with their settings to set up the necessary technology and equipment to facilitate streaming sessions into the settings. This was a new concept to all of us but gave us another way of keeping the project alive.

As restrictions began to lift and we were able to return to face to face delivery, within government guidelines, we had to adapt to ensure our sessions were COVID safe.

We were limited as to what we could take in to settings however we overcame not being able to use our props, scarves, puppets, etc. by creating laminated picture props that could be wiped down and adapted the activities of songs and rhymes to be socially distanced, using our own bodies for movement for pulse and rhythm. We also overcame not being able to take in instruments by using what the setting had and creating sounds with found materials and items. As restrictions were lifted in the last few weeks of the project we were able to arrange a shadowing opportunity for one of our new, EY colleagues and arrange for visiting musicians to perform to some of the staff and children.



Although we were working in unprecedented and challenging times we have developed our EY team’s resilience and creativity in keeping the project on track.

The Composition and Digital Performance

Following the visits by the Early Years Practitioners much evidence was collated and subsequently curated which afforded some musical motifs that were produced by the children. This allowed the musical composer to take these small motifs and use them as a basis for a composition. However this was further enhanced by the musical motifs informing a story. The story was composed by Ann Stott who took the evidenced musical motifs which created a story that references climate change.

From here the storyboard informed the musical composition which was compiled for Piano, Strings and Synthesized Instruments and when blended with actual sounds produced by the children created a digital soundscape.

The story was overlaid in text and accompanied by a video. This video included still photos and moving video of the children within the settings and their artwork along with suitable environmental still and moving shots.

The video was designed to be narrated by Early Years Practitioners, Teachers and Parents/Carers for their children.

After 4 days of releasing the video via YouTube there have already been approximately 811 engagements and on this basis by the end of December 2021 it is anticipated that 12,976 people will have engaged with the composition and video.

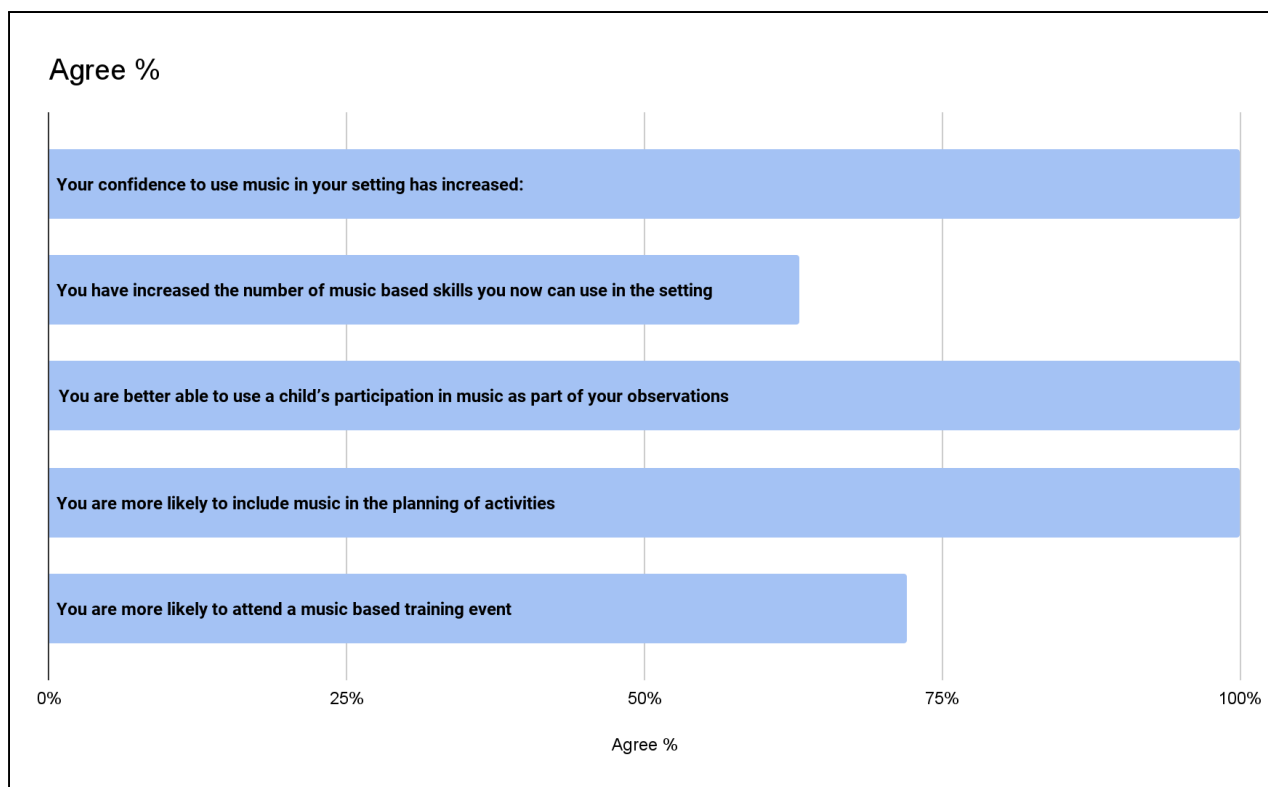
To view the final work please visit:

 [Tale of Tykki and Bughik - Dalla Project - Save our planet #TeamSeas](#)

Conclusion

The project engaged with 80, 2 - 4 year olds and 17 Early Years Practitioners.

From the data collected at the end of the delivery and our conversations with the EY Practitioners involved we can see an increase in their confidence and a recognition of the importance of music in the Early Years.



EY Practitioners commented that the project had raised the profile of music in their setting and given them freedom to use music as the main vehicle for learning and as the main activity. They expressed a commitment to giving the children more access to musical instruments and a recognition that music can be in and around everything. They had also learned about how to help children with composition and were spending time changing words to songs, both new and old, to make new ones with the children.

The commitment of the practitioners will sustain the ethos of the project for the future.

“Lucy said that instead of just singing the activity, she uses the drums/percussion with the children, and without the project, she wouldn't have thought about doing this to increase concentration at the end of the day when they are tired. The project is impacting on how the staff go about their usual practice. Lucy said that she is also making more of changing the words of the songs and building new verses or versions using the ideas from the children.”

The Early Years practitioners were asked to describe any new musical skills that had benefited the children, here are some of their observations;

- *Children have had experiences with a wider range of instruments and sounds.*
- *They all got to use various musical instruments that they might not have had a chance to before and see in real life various instruments like various recorders.*
- *They have learnt how to play new instruments and make a range of sounds using simple resources like a piece of paper!!*
- *Z1 stands out, also S1. S1 really enjoyed the small group in lockdown, changing words to songs. Z1 has really shown awareness and copying and conducting skills.*
- *using natural materials to make music, particularly percussion.*

We recorded in excess of 100 audio and video clips of the children's creative, musical improvisations. These along with images of the children and their artwork culminated into a new composition and digital performance piece.



At the end of the project we asked the parents of the children involved if they had noticed their child singing new songs or making new sounds recently? These are some of their observations;

- She sings quite regularly now and makes up songs too.
- Loves singing and making new tunes, as well as using instruments.
- singing songs we don't sing at home
- This term, E has really enjoyed singing- mostly making up her own, but there's a noticeable difference! She sings herself to sleep, sings in the car, while she is playing! So much more than she used to.
- I has been singing new songs and pretending to play the bongos. She has also been making sounds on items.

- She likes to sing songs from "Frozen" and she tells us about learning new songs in nursery and she makes up her own songs whilst playing but doesn't like to sing to you unless she requests to.
- S often starts singing "Snack time is coming" or "hello, bubble A" he then changes these songs to other situations.

The parents also noticed other differences in their child's vocal development;

- lots more singing!
- Stringing more words together in a sentence
- E can change the tone/pitch of her voice as she sings.
- uses different voices for games.
- S uses different intonations when she is playing with toys to give characters different voices
- Can use loud and quiet voices.

Our Early Years team is constantly developing and the Dalla project has enhanced everyone's skills during its delivery. We will continue to have weekly planning meetings via Google Meets/Zoom as we feel this gives us a consolidated approach to our work and creates a supportive ethos for the whole team. We have created a bank of online resources which we can use and develop in the future to support our projects, especially if we need to deliver projects remotely. Our EY Music facilitators had to stream some of their sessions into settings, this proved to be more adult led as opposed to the ambition of child led experiential



learning. However it was a really good way for us to support the EY practitioners in the setting to interact with the children. We realised this approach actually helped the EY practitioners to take the lead in activities more quickly and increased their confidence. It also means that we have a strategy in place for future streamed sessions if required.

Because we have become increasingly used to virtual sessions, we are well placed to provide online training to a range of organisations involved in the EY sector and raise the importance of Early Years

Music. This will broaden our scope for the future and provide accessible training across rural Cornwall and beyond.

Despite the complications of COVID, the completion of the project and the resulting composition will raise the profile of our Early Years Music Education Service in Cornwall and further afield. In turn this will promote our work and help us to provide even more opportunities for the under 5's to create their music.

Case Studies

Case Study 1 - Penryn Primary:

Child G.

Written by Emily Garrod, CMST EY Music Facilitator

We chose G for our case study for Penryn Nursery. She is a very musical child and Polly mentioned that this is one of her strengths. G sings a lot to herself, especially when she is playing with the rice and kinetic sand. She loves books and she will sing a narration of the story whilst looking at the pictures. G is very rhythmical and dances around the nursery a lot.

When I first met G I noticed that she used music a lot but in a solitary way:

(Notes from :05/11/20) She sat with a book and started a recitative, singing the story to herself. She rocked to the pulse of her song and at one point tapped her leg in time with her singing. She was keen for me to join her, so we sat and read the book together exploring the clip clop of the hooves and she was able to make this sound using her tongue. We made troll sounds and then moved onto 3 little pigs. Again, she explored sound whilst working through the story. She has very limited language, but she was able to communicate well in this way.

G really struggled when communicating with the other children in the nursery. She had low self-esteem and weak social skills. She has a developmental condition which has slowed her growth, so she is much smaller than her class-mates. She was very pushy with them and tended to snatch toys off them and shout at them to get her own way.

I witnessed her using sound to often try to force the other children to do something:

(Notes from: 19/11/20) G wanted to get S out of the saucer that she was sitting in. She spent a lot of time shaking her maracas and tapping the maracas on the saucer but S wouldn't move!

I have noticed that during the music project her social skills have improved hugely. The music has given G a chance to be in her element and celebrate her musicality with her friends. The other children love engaging with her in this way. G uses the musical instruments in the Nursery to play with her friends. She likes to conduct the children and B especially enjoys playing bands with her. They don't argue when they are playing with the instruments but use the music to communicate well with each other.

(Notes from: 8/07/21) BR, G, S and M1 formed a little band. M1 and G were sitting opposite each-other on chairs. BR asked M1 to play "Wag-ner Rock". G said "I'm going to sing it". S pulled up a chair. BR says to M1 "after you it's me". M nods. G gives the uke to S- brilliant sharing. BR goes to get a chair. G says to S "can I have a go" and she passes the uke to her. BR returns with a chair. It was a lovely moment of sharing and communicating through music.

Overall the increased use of music in the setting has boosted G's confidence. She loves the music and is good at joining in, pitch matching and remembering songs. This has given her a huge confidence boost which in turn has made it easier for her to play nicely with her friends and communicate more easily.

Case Study 2 - Treverbyn Trailblazers:

Child E1

Written by Jenny Crow, CMST EY Music Facilitator

E1 has been selected for this case study because she was involved right from the beginning of the first Dalla project which started in January 2020. She was in the younger class, Damselflies, and at the time was almost a refuser, not willingly joining in. When her group stood up for songs and rhymes involving actions, voice play, moving like a train, hopping, jumping etc. she might stand to one side or stand and let others carry on around her. She would even sit next to her older brother and stop him from joining in. She would stand and watch as others sang or chanted, absolutely still and silent. Once Hayley and I had noted this, we looked for any signs of participation.

05/02/2020 E1 did not want to participate with scrunchie at first, but gave "up...down" a go showing signs of wanting to set the pace for the girls near her. Hayley noted that E1's older brother joined in more when he was **not** next to his sister. It seemed as if she had plenty of personality and character but as if she was not sure of what was being asked of her or if she wanted to do it.

When E1 was playing in free-flow in the toddler-room, she mimicked a scream of another child, so she was not averse to creating vocal sounds; maybe she just preferred to do them when she felt more comfortable and relaxed.

11/03/20 By early March we saw the first sign of participation. E1 wanted to be the leader of a train when we chanted "Engine, Engine" at slow and fast speeds, but she did not participate in the words.

11/11/20 At the outset of this new, restarted Dalla project, E1, now moved up into the Dragonflies Room, seemed more willing to engage. (Her older brother had now moved up into Reception Class at school). She joined in lots of finger movements with so much stamina and concentration as she listened to, and watched, Flight of the Bumblebee.

2/12/2020 E1 was becoming far more confident. When I gave the children an opportunity to tap their own message to Mr Woodpecker, ("Old Mr Woodpecker") E1 wanted to, but then was too shy. This was a shame as we were so delighted that she wanted to but she just felt that she had to back down under the pressure of everyone looking at her. Later on in the same session, during the cool down, I played "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley. E1 held hands with R1 to dance together and they turned in circles with big smiles on their faces – such a lovely change from nine months earlier when she would just stand still!

17.03.21 I spent a long time on the carpet watching the children play the chime bars in free flow but E1 came and talked to me! She told me all about her "wooden one" at home that

she has. As she played on the chime bars she was fascinated with D who was making his bars tessellate horizontally in his case so she explored changing the bars around and playing them in different ways.

19/5/21 During the week, between my visits, Hayley sent me a film of 6 girls playing "Ring-a-ring-o'-roses"! One of these was E1.

16/06/2021 As it was E1's birthday I played Happy Birthday to her on one of the recorders that I had taken in to demonstrate to the class. She was 4 today and it put a huge smile on her face. She no longer seemed so daunted with public attention. E1 later played along quite socially with D2 and B2 on percussion instruments as I played "Louisiana Waltz" on one of my recorders.

To conclude, I believe E1 has blossomed so much in taking part with the Dalla Project. She has:

- wanted to make suggestions
- attempted leadership
- enjoyed listening to pieces of music
- overcome shyness
- played instruments in front of others
- talked about what she does at home
- engaged with adults both on a 1:1 in free flow and with her friends in a group

I think she enjoys musical activities and experiences and can express herself through them.

Case Study 3 - Truro Nursery School

Child A1

Written by Sophie Orchard, CMST EY Music Facilitator

A1 is a 3 year old child who I first noticed playing away from other children in the group. A1 struggles with social interaction and forming bonds with both adults and children. A1's baseline assessment reflects their difficulties with socialisation.

Initially I was unable to deliver in person due to covid precautions, but the staff in the setting began to give feedback about A1. In the initial sessions A1 explored the music activities, such as using the handbell, and appeared not to actively engage with activities, preferring to sit on the outside of groups. A1 benefitted from having one to one sessions with the staff members and showed confidence using the ideas used within the project. During a feedback session, it was noted that A1 came over with the bell and explored its sound. Moving closer to Sera, ringing it rhythmically with a good sense of pulse, A1 demonstrated a desire to communicate non verbally.

Within a few weeks, A1 was demonstrating her improving ability and willingness to communicate with staff and be with other children in a slightly larger group this time and Sera noted:

Infact, during the session on Thursday Lucy took out a large basket of percussion instruments and held an impromptu nursery rhyme singing group with the children (X2, Z1, G1, Z2, L2, A1, C1 and I1) who chose a shaker to use as they sung. They were all sat at the top of the bank in dappled sunshine, singing away. It was lovely to see and hear the nursery rhymes being sung in an outdoors environment. (3.12.20).

This exhibits that by having free access to instruments, and then incorporating them into simple activities, children are able to determine for themselves how they wish to communicate, offering choice to participate. A1 contributed to this group activity and gave meaning to every move, word and sound they made. It was fully inclusive.

The following week, via live streaming, I demonstrated a song to the children and asked for their ideas. Many children gave their ideas, but A1 spoke clearly for the first time, and offered the idea of birds hopping. This was significant as A1 had not spoken directly to myself before, and this improvement was noted by Lucy.

After Christmas, and Lockdown, I was able to visit the children in person. The team had supported the settings involved in the project with resource sheets which followed our ethos of child led activities. They were also sent to the families of those children who were at home due to lockdown. The staff used these each week, often across a few weeks, with the small group who were the children of key workers or were from vulnerable families.

I noted that the first day in the setting was wonderful, and the children recognised me, a clear sign of the resilience of children and their ability to form bonds, despite no physical presence.

A1 had progressed greatly with her confidence and social skills as the staff had been using our resource ideas during lockdown. I left instruments out for provocation which encouraged A1 to join Z2, who was exploring different timbres. A1 was able to work as a team with Z2 and C1 to make music together. C1 began copying A1, with A1 waiting patiently for C1 to finish her part of their musical conversation. Both A1 and C1 struggle in groups and C1 is often non-verbal. A1, in my opinion, was showing a greater level of social skills and communication, accessed through her innate musicality, following some musical interaction from Lucy who had been leading a small group in the freeflow earlier. A1 and C1 chose to join in, adding free choice percussion to the song. This example reiterates that by adding another way for the children to express themselves/communicate in an activity it can enable, in this case, bonding, communication and social skill-turn taking, in a free choice environment.

A major breakthrough with A1, which impacted the rest of the sessions, was when I spent some one to one time with her when she had observed our group activity, but had not actively taken part. In this case, there were many children in the setting that day, which often overwhelms A1 and supports the low baseline scores in this area. Below is an extract from my log, outlining the interaction:

I took my floor drum over to A1, who was playing with some connecting blocks. I started making different sounds on the drum, dropping the bricks, using the animals, modelling the drum to A1. I noticed there was an Elephant so I started to sing the "When I bang my drum" song, but A1 was less interested in this, so I tried "Walking in the jungle". This got the

attention of A1... I asked A1 for her favourite song, which was "Twinkle Twinkle". We sang this together three times before she moved onto "Baa Baa Black Sheep". A1 asked me to change the colour to grey, then purple. A1 drummed a steady beat and at times, appeared to drum a rhythm of subdivision of the beat. A1 also followed when I slowed the pulse down toward the end of the song and anticipated the beat. A1 then surprised me by singing her own song about flowers, recorded in three parts. In one recording, you can hear a little ditty about making cookies by two other girls. They also came to join us, but A1 moved the drum away from them and preferred to interact just with me, which I did after praising the two girls for their lovely cookie song.

This interaction highlighted the social skills that A1 has developed. A1 has a clear sense of what she wants, and is able to make choices about how she wants to do things. The impact of this one to one child-led moment, led to continued trust and creativity throughout the rest of the project. I believe A1's confidence to change the words in the song, is a continuation of the Cuckoo Cherry Tree and Little Blue Birds resources the Dalla Team had produced over lockdown.

In the 22nd April session, A1 approached me and picked up the drum straight away, a clear sign that A1 enjoyed my company. I asked A1 what would the Elephant in the puzzle sound like, that had been left out as suggested provocation. A1 created some music suggesting the Elephant was "stomping." A1 listened and reacted to the suggestions, responding in an appropriate manner, which is a demonstration of A1's developing self awareness, managing feelings and emotions as well as her physical skills, an improvement on the initial baseline results.

A poignant example of her developing emotional capabilities was when A1 and L2, both tried to snatch my drum, and I had to explain why they had to wait first. It was a positive scenario as both children understood and accepted that they couldn't have something. It was a big step forward with how they fit in society considering A1's initial baseline results. A1 clearly sought me out from other adults and activities, which reinforces the bond music has achieved. This continued throughout the session as A1 observed the larger group activity, looking up from her 'safe space' to see what I was doing. During the one to one with Lucy, A1 approached and tried to take the drum and chime bars again. Lucy explained to her that I had offered for her to come over a few times and she chose not to.

Another significant demonstration of A1's emotional and social development, occurred on the 13th May, when she came to join a band and share instruments with others:

A1, I1, S5, X3, E2 made a band and were playing together...A1 and L2 joined me to play with the chime bars...A1 and E2 shared the chime bars. A1 gave a stick to E2 and helped her open the box.

This interaction highlights how A1 was able to have empathy for another child without a beater, sharing hers as she had two. Not only this, but it shows her ability to problem solve and work together as she was in a larger group. Moreover, Lucy has noticed her seeking out larger groups and how confident she has become in her abilities. We have also noticed her kindness, a clear indication of the progress she has made compared to her initial assessment results made by the staff in the setting, which has been enabled and supported by the music activities of the Dalla Project.

Furthermore, on the 20th May, A1 found the confidence to sit at the front of the group for the large group activity. A1 was no longer being taken into the smaller groups, but was

empowered to stay with the bigger group for the whole Dalla session. A1 sang “wind the bobbin up” and was doing the actions, at the front of the circle, to the other children, highlighting her improving social skills. During the freeflow observation time, I played “Whale Song” on the ipad. F1, S1 and A1 were really interested in the sounds and had a go at making some of these sounds together. A1 noticed I had a sore thumb and asked if it hurt, and looked very concerned with her facial expressions, asking if I needed a plaster. As well as this expression of empathy, I noticed that A1 has been using more facial expressions and this interaction was a reflection of A1’s growing social awareness.

As the project progressed, so did A1’s confidence with communication, as in one of the later sessions, A1 chose to use an instrument during the welcome song, something she often does not join in with. L2, A1 and X3 took an instrument and used them whilst singing along quietly and focusing intently on Lucy. Later in this session A1 contributed a few verses to the song we sang, and was very confident at leading and being an active member of the group. Lucy had noted in our feedback session that across the sessions, A1 had been growing in confidence, especially with singing and giving ideas this week. Lucy mentioned that the follow-on ideas and provocation, as well as recapping ideas in the session led to a conversation where A1 explained to Lucy what a Narwhal was. This clearly demonstrates how our musically inspired resources and activities can be used in a wider sense, advocating these conversations and interactions, enabling children’s innate musicality to enhance their learning and development in Early Years.

On the 10th of June, A1 expressed her willingness to be an active member of the group when we explored different sounds. I gave the suggestion of a few animals and waited for the children to start interpreting the idea. A1 suggested a sloth. Not only this, but A1 asked to get the book with the sloth in it, to show us it’s picture and how it moves. I then encouraged A1 to direct our creation of sound, using other animals from the book. These moments indubitably show the social progression A1 has made throughout the project. It also demonstrates the importance of enabling music in education to support all aspects of the EYFS statutory framework.

Nearing the end of the project the children had a choice of drums or other percussion. Lucy followed the children who had already started exploring their instruments. They started to watch her and she was able to get them to start and stop. Lucy was pleased that they had managed to follow her without verbal communication. Lucy modelled different sounds and dynamics and offered for a few children to lead. A1 and Z1 had a go at leading. A1 was very confident at this, and remained in the group, contributing appropriately, demonstrating her sensitivity to the situation. I created a song which follows the story of Mr Gumpy, using the book to help us with each of the characters. The children took on the role of a character and got into the boat at the right time. They swayed to the pulse and found it fun to be in the boat or outside. A1 volunteered to be several of the characters in the book and was happy to work with the other children and the adults in the group. A1 has been having a positive and meaningful impact on the group more frequently since that initial one to one time, and is volunteering for activities, a clear exhibition of her improved confidence and social capabilities.

In the penultimate session, A1 ran across the room and gave me a hug from behind. A1 also became very concerned that Lucy had not welcomed me in the ‘Welcome song’ and later wanted to help me carry my flute outside. During the freeflow, A1 invited me to play her superhero game that she started with X1. A1 played well with X1, whom she has formed a friendship with, often after making music with X1 in our improvisation sessions. This session

highlighted the progress A1 has made in her abilities to form relationships and bonds, with adults and children.

Following this, the final session embodied the considerable progress socially and emotionally that A1 has made. A1 ran to myself again, calling my name. I was told how much she missed me as she gave me a hug. A1 then gave X1 a very gentle hug from the side, and listened to X1 when she said that she had "been cuddled enough". A1 understood the impact of her hug and why she needed to let go. She even lay across my lap, moving one of my arms over her, like a blanket, so she could play with her instrument and with X1 too. Later, A1 was chosen to present the picture card they had made, to me. A1 did this proudly and it was wonderful to see how she confidently got up, took the card and delivered it. A1 then played with other children, taking turns on the slide, talking to others and mixing well, something that was inconceivable with the child I met at the beginning of the project.

In conclusion, this project has provided all of the children with a stimulus or platform to support and enable learning across all of the Early years foundation stage statutory framework. The Dalla project focused around enabling and encouraging the children's innate musicality and creating a composition from their ideas, which A1 has contributed to as her confidence improved. The children have all made wonderful music and created songs. A1 has been but one of the children who was discovered to be capable of making up a song ad hoc. The Dalla project has shown, particularly with A1, how music and music based activities, when delivered in a child-led manner, can nurture all areas of a child's development. Music can greatly impact a child's social development, especially at this time of minimal social interaction and social distancing measures. The project demonstrated the many ways children communicate with each other and adults, if we stop for a moment to listen to what they have to say, whether verbal or non-verbally. A1 showed many examples of effective non-verbal communications, especially with C1 as mentioned previously. Following this, that initial one to one with A1, marked the catalyst for big improvements across all the areas in which she struggled. A1 was shy, preferred to play alone and was always on the outside of the group during group activities, but throughout the project she has developed her confidence which has enabled her empathetic, kind, sensitive and creative nature to shine through. A1 is making bold choices and directing what happens in group settings, such as fetching the book with the sloth in it, volunteering for different roles in our singing story roleplay of Mr Gumpy, reacting musically to different scenarios and creating beautiful and original songs. The Dalla project has been so beneficial for this child, it has been a privilege to watch this child develop across the past year.

The Settings

Penryn Nursery

Penryn Nursery is a maintained nursery part of Penryn Primary Academy. The children are aged between 3 and 4. From September 2021 the Nursery will be including 2 year olds. The Nursery is purpose built with a large outdoor area. This stimulating area is fully enclosed and partially covered to allow access whatever the weather. The children are encouraged to explore and learn through play. Everything is designed to develop the essential social and learning skills children need when entering formal education. The Nursery likes to promote inquisitive minds and independent attitudes and have created a space in which children can thrive. The Nursery is a large space, full of exciting and engaging equipment which is readily available for the children to access themselves.

Treverbyn Trailblazers Nursery

Trailblazers Nursery has been a part of Treverbyn Academy since 2011 with the deprived catchment area of Penwithick & Stenalees. We are registered with Ofsted to take up to 46 children in any one session and we can take children from birth to 5 year olds. We currently have six fully qualified staff and will be adding another staff member in September. Our team are fantastic at helping each other out, and between us we have several skills that we can relay to the children.

One of the points from our OFSTED in July 2019 which we are very proud of highlighted children's behaviour as exemplary. That children understand & follow the rules exceptionally well and have the utmost respect for others and their environment.

There is no question that outside spaces are essential to a child's holistic development. Our outdoor learning environment is developing at a very fast pace with the addition of outdoor learning activities; e.g., a nature trail, our interactive music wall, bug hotel, tree climbing and den building and have added a canopy for shelter. These all enhance children's own ability at risk taking in our safe environment.

We strive for the best possible outcomes for all children using the Early Years Foundation Stage recognising that every child is unique. We provide high quality care through a well-motivated, knowledgeable and committed team of practitioners, who create a wide range of opportunities focusing on fun for all children to learn through their play thus nurturing trust and confidence.

Truro Nursery School

Truro Nursery School was established by Mrs Patricia Kent MBE and given to the Local Authority in 1972. The school has been extended considerably since then and we now offer places to 80 three and four year olds and 20 two year olds every year.

Our inspection by Ofsted is different to that of a private, voluntary or independent nursery or pre school. This is because we are a local authority school and as such we are subject to the rigorous section 5 inspection.

Recently, we have been recognised and accredited by ICAN (The children's communication charity) as a language supportive school. We are also qualified as a forest school and have been trained by Jabadao to develop movement play. We have an Outstanding Ofsted grade and strive to be leaders in early education within Cornwall.

We work with a number of other partners to offer services both in school and in the local community and we are a strategic partner in one of Cornwall's teaching schools.

Biographies

Early Years Practitioners

Polly Barnicoat-Hall, Nursery Teacher at Penryn Primary Academy Nursery

I have worked at the Primary School for the last 15 years and have spent most of this time in the Nursery. I have always enjoyed music as a leisure pursuit, especially live music of a variety of genres. I believe music is integral to life, it can express a myriad of emotions and bring much joy. My daughter has been fortunate to have had very good musical opportunities and support through her schooling in Penryn both at primary and secondary level and is now studying for a music degree at Leeds Conservatoire. So when the opportunity to have musical expertise available to our very young pupils at our school arose, I was very keen to take part. Being part of the project has made me realise how much music we already did, but also gave me the confidence to explore using music in other ways and give children the opportunity to compose in addition to having musicians visit and inspire.

Hayley James, Nursery Assistant at Treverbyn Trailblazers Nursery

I started my Early Years journey back in 2012 doing an apprenticeship. I completed my apprenticeship and then took time out to have my two children. I started at Treverbyn trailblazers about 4 years ago as a nursery assistant. I wanted to take part in the Dalla Music Project to learn more about how to use music more in my role and learn more about the benefits it has helping children on speech and language. I have learned a wider range of nursery rhymes and how to use instruments effectively with children. I have seen some of our children gain confidence in our sessions which had been amazing to witness.

Lucy Chamberlain, Class Teacher, Truro Nursery School

I trained to be a teacher in 2002 by completing a PGCE at the university of Reading following a degree in Psychology. I then taught in year two and reception in London for 3 years before undertaking a family support role as part of an 'Excellence Cluster' in a deprived part of Reading. After two years in this role I became Foundation Stage Coordinator at a local school in Reading for a further 3 years before moving to Cornwall and starting work at Truro Nursery in 2011 after having my first baby Sam.

Throughout my experiences I have always been passionate about outdoor and creative opportunities for children and their importance for so many areas of child development as well as being a fundamental part of wellbeing and childhood. I do not have a 'musical background' but have always enjoyed music and remember some good training I had early in my career which has meant I have always sung a lot with children in all my classes as well as with my own children. I now have 3 children who all enjoy music. The two eldest are learning the drums and electric guitar with the company 'Rock Steady' who teach children via being in a band at school. This has been a fantastic experience and has opened the door to introducing lots of music into our lives. I don't feel they get a lot of other music teaching at school, at the moment they are not really even singing due to covid which I feel is sad.

At Truro Nursery I was lucky enough to work with a wonderful Nursery Nurse who had great musicality and had spent time with the music trust and had other music training. We have

always enjoyed playing music to the children, drawing to music, moving to music and using instruments and singing. We use music and rhyme a lot with our children as a key language development tool as well as for emotional development and wellbeing.

As with all the staff at the nursery I work in a very child centred way, responding to the children's interests and scaffolding their development from their individual starting point with a key emphasis on personal, social and emotional development. I am partly drawn to the early years as it allows teachers the freedom to work in this way ; as children progress through primary school the structure becomes much less flexible and I feel there is little room for learning outdoors or creative activities unless individual teachers are passionate about these areas. I also feel strongly that the early years are a critical period in child development and high quality education and family support is essential at this stage. Children develop in such incredible ways during this time and I feel passionately that they should have highly qualified, highly skilled professionals working with them in order to give them the best possible start.

As a reflective person I am always keen to learn more as there is always more to learn. Children teach you something new everyday and the opportunity to learn more about how to encourage and support musical development is very welcome and I hope many other teachers will also take up the opportunity.

Early Years Music Facilitators

Emily Garrod

I am an instrumentalist and Early Years Music Practitioner based in Cornwall. I studied classical clarinet and jazz saxophone as an under and then post graduate student. I have been teaching woodwind for over 10 years, first for Bristol Plays Music and now for the Cornwall Music Service Trust. My love of performance has led me to play with many musicians from various backgrounds and in several ensembles including “The National Saxophone Choir of Great Britain” (with whom I toured in Europe and performed extensively across England and Scotland), Bristol Latin Band “Salsa Nova” and the Malbec Clarinet Quartet.

My interest in Early Years Music started about fifteen years ago when I attended a course in Bristol led by Susan Young. The course was really ahead of it's time as we were encouraged to spend time in Early Years settings and watch and join in with the music that is created by children aged between two and four, rather than a course teaching us how to “teach” music to the under fours. I found the course very rewarding and inspirational, but it left me with many questions about how to approach Early Years Music practically. To help with my education I shadowed two very accomplished EY music practitioners, Vicky Meadows and Bill Roberts. It was interesting to see how they worked differently within EY settings and it gave me the confidence to start to work in Bristol in the Early Years sector for Bristol Plays Music.

I loved the improvisatory nature of Early Years Music. Always have a plan, always be prepared to go off plan! Listen to the children and let them lead. Work with them to make music and never expect to teach a child what they can already do naturally. This worked well with my instrumental playing, as improvisation has always been at the heart of what I love to do musically.

When coming to Cornwall I had the opportunity to re-join an Early Years team and worked with the inspirational Ann Stott on the very first EY project for CMST. We very quickly realised that our ethos should be that EY music should be “caught and not taught”. We were blown away by the depth of creativity that was evident in the musical ideas that were being created by children as old as two or three. Working together on a project enabled us to step back and observe which was a really valuable experience.

The Dalla project has been unlike any other that we have undertaken! We have had to start and stop due to Covid which has really made it feel very drawn out and at times disjointed. We have adapted to the conditions in which we had to work. We have created online resources, done virtual music sessions and tried to support our EY practitioners when they have needed extra material. The children have been wonderful! They have embraced us coming into the setting and working with them and we have lots of lovely evidence of their spontaneous music making.

It has been great to get feedback from the parents to discover that their children have loved being part of the music projects, and this means even more during recent times. I think that the team has really developed over the Dalla project. There is much more communication between us due to our weekly planning meetings and we have really supported each-other throughout the pandemic. We have definitely learned some new skills that will help us in the future. We managed to complete our wonderful project at a time of great uncertainty

and stress by adapting, communicating and listening to each-other and that feels like a huge achievement.

Jenny Crow

My teaching career began as a Y3 Primary Teacher, in Southwark, London. From the start, I have run school recorder clubs for beginners, for trebles and ensembles, and run children's choirs and guitar clubs. I have worked in Portugal and sung songs in other languages with the children at Cascais International School. I have spent many years in Cornwall as a full time classroom teacher and primary schools' music coordinator - supporting music planning, assessment and music making across all the year groups: Reception to Year 6. This has included taking part in many community projects and music festivals as well as classroom teaching. A few years ago, I joined the Cornwall Music Service Trust and the Early Years team to continue teaching, but to specialise in music. I now enjoy teaching curriculum music, delivering CPD music workshops, working on progression ladders of skills and knowledge for KS1 and KS2, creating music overviews for schools long term and medium term planning, taking instrumental First Access courses, learning more about Kodaly Inspired Music Teaching, learning more about Early Years music education and delivering Early Years Music Projects with CMST EYMES.

The Dalla Project has been my first serious experience with Early Years children since my own children attended a music group! The closest I have been was working with Reception Class children. On joining the team I experienced a few workshops with a childminder's group prior to the start of this project. As a music teacher this project has taught me many things.

I have absolutely loved getting to know the song repertoire, and correct pitch range, from books recommended by Ann, from books of my own and from Kodaly inspired music teaching that I discovered more about during Lockdown. I have loved all the finger-play, the actions, the games, the use of instruments, the lyrics and expression that comes with all the songs and rhymes for this age group.

Covid has made a big impact on this project as our first project came to a halt and had to be re-started. Lockdown gave me time for personal research. I have been hugely inspired by Ann and working with such young children in the Dalla project, that I read about child development and Musical development in the Early Years: S Young, N Burke, Z Greenhalgh, and more.

The first project gave me the opportunity of working with smaller groups of children and trying to follow the themes, with an animal perspective, of the nursery, but the second, re-started project gave me the chance to learn how to follow the children more as a whole group. The supportive, weekly team planning and sharing of logs and experiences has hugely impacted on the way I deliver a session and observe the children - the children thrive on fun, repetition, familiarity and make huge strides in confidence in participation when you take and play with what they give you.

Unfortunately, covid caused restrictions on what we could do. We learned how to overcome not being able to attend the setting by making PDF resources of songs and activities for families and settings on a weekly basis and also by learning how to stream a lesson online, if it was needed. We overcame not being able to use our props, such as scarves, giant scrunchies, puppets, soft toys, etc. by creating laminated picture props that could be wiped

down and adapting the activities of songs and rhymes to be socially distanced and just by using our own bodies for movement for pulse and rhythm. We also overcame not being able to take in instruments by using what the setting had and creating sounds with found materials and items.

Although Trailblazers had to close, due to Covid, in the last week, it still felt like we had managed to complete the project as we had been through such a shared journey, working with children old and new as they joined the setting and working with my Key Worker and the staff. I really hope that I have left them with the desire to notice and nourish children's innate musicality and given Hayley the confidence to continue leading music sessions in the future. Because of the Dalla Project, I feel like the children have given me a legacy: their inherent need to create and move and improvise has also made me bring this approach into both my instrumental and curriculum music teaching within primary schools. Also because of the close teamwork that developed over this project, I am very much looking forward to working on similar projects in the future.

Sophie Orchard

I trained at the Royal Welsh College of music and Drama where I studied music performance on the oboe. Whilst in Cardiff, I worked as a Carer and found the clients I visited engaged well with music. I often took my instruments with me to connect with my clients. I returned to Cornwall after my studies and began working in a care home providing meaningful occupation to the residents. I quickly found that music options were always well received and had a positive and long lasting effect on those with and without dementia. As well as this, I was working for Cornwall Music Service Trust as a peripatetic woodwind teacher. I noticed that the children I taught thrived and enjoyed the lessons more when they directed their studies, with me building in technical and theoretical work into the pieces the children chose. I have always enjoyed being around children and it was the love of spending time with my younger sister and God daughter that led me to the Early Years Team. Despite being new to this line of work, I have found many parallels between the beginning of life, and end of life enrichment. I hope to gain formal qualifications relating to Early years, and have been fully supported by the very knowledgeable and experienced team. My first project with the team has been the Dalla project.

Heading into the Dalla project, I had very little experience with leading the delivery to this age group. My previous Dementia experience has really been useful as I have been able to communicate successfully through music using a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication. The Dalla project has been a brilliant opportunity for me to be part of the Early Years team, and despite changing settings due to Covid 19, I have found confidence in my abilities and planning skills. Another benefit to this project is that it took place across three settings with three members of staff. Jenny, Emily and I would meet on a Tuesday evening where we would discuss and plan our sessions. I would then take this plan and adapt it further to the needs of my children, and then further adapt this following the lead of the children whilst delivering the session. The Dalla project really supports the ethos of the team and I feel has encouraged me to promote child-led activity and enable staff to see the innate musicality of the children they work with every day.

The Dalla project has expanded on my skill set as a teacher as I have been able to take my experience of teaching one to one online lessons, to now feel confident to deliver a session streaming into the setting, with the help of the staff present with the children.

Before the Dalla project I suffered from performance anxiety and I was worried about my ability to work in this new environment, however, the support from the team and the staff in the setting, quickly led me to overcome this.

I have always been able to change the words to songs, privately in my own company, but never felt confident to let my creativity flow in front of other people. Since taking part in the Dalla project, I have found a new confidence in my ability to change the words to existing tunes, creating new and relevant songs. For example, I was able to create a song that followed the story of Mr. Gumpy's outing by John Burningham. This was to the tune of the traditional song Row, Row, Row your boat. The leaders at the setting thought this was brilliant as I was able to combine it into an activity that had the children taking part in a role play that was inclusive on all levels. Other examples of this have been where I have taken words and phrases, the children have spoken or sung, and turned them into a song. I have enjoyed following the lead of the children, they are all so creative, whether in their movements, use of percussion or voice, or even choice of language and phrasing. I have also found myself becoming more confident at creating new songs, something solely reserved for my dog as we sing songs for certain tasks or toys. My husband has noticed that I have been more creative since taking part in the project and finds himself singing these 'dog songs' around the house too.

The Dalla project has proved to me the resilience of the children and just how flexible they are to change. Working through a pandemic has allowed me to use technology to live stream to the children and then fit seamlessly into the setting when I was able to visit in person, with the children being able to recognise and engage with me instantly, despite gaps in delivery due to various lockdowns. We have also created resources, something I was not confident with doing, but the collaboration between the team has been pivotal in expanding my skill set.

I have really enjoyed the Dalla project and feel that working at the pace of the children has been a key point for the project. The themes we covered in the planning fit well with the curriculum of the setting, aiding in their exploration of key texts as well as targeting many, if not all of the EYFS statutory framework, especially as I have been able to link it with the core texts, drawing inspiration from Ralph McTell's Alphabet zoo for inspiration. Ralph McTell's Alphabet Zoo inspired some of the creative activities, use of descriptive words for the animals such as the Animal song they created "a tiger, a tiger, stripes, stripes rar!...A cheetah, cheetah, running really fast...a mouse, a mouse, is really small". The songs he writes have lots of repetition and I feel that the Dalla project ethos has been able to highlight the innate musicality of the children and I have embraced capturing and nurturing their ideas.