

## **CMST Early Years Music Education Service.**

### **Phase 3 Research Project.**

#### **Case Study.**

Written by Emily Garrod with contributions by staff at Camborne Nursery.

*“What impact does music have in encouraging levels of a child’s involvement in an Early Years setting?”*

#### **The setting – Camborne Nursery.**

Camborne is a town towards the west of Cornwall. It was very prosperous in the mid 1880s because of the mining boom in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, due to the decline of the mining industry in Cornwall, Camborne became very poor and in 2010 the IMD data ranked Pengegon in Camborne as the most deprived area in Cornwall.

Camborne Nursery is situated in Camborne, near the centre of the town. It was awarded “Outstanding” at its last OFSTED and children between the ages of 2 and 4 attend. The staff and teachers at the setting are very highly qualified and experienced and create a wonderfully creative and hands on environment for the children to explore. There is a lovely outdoors space and the staff already use music and song a lot in the children’s learning.

#### **The project.**

Emily Garrod, an Early Years Music Practitioner working for the Cornwall Music Service Trust, visited the nursery once a week for a period of 20 weeks. This was for 2 hours on a Tuesday morning starting at the beginning of October 2018.

Emily worked with all of the 3 and 4 year olds which meant there were roughly just over 20 children involved each week. We split the group into two so that they weren’t too big. Each group joined in with an adult led session in the Sunshine Room. This introduced the children to new songs and musical games. Tamsin Williams (teacher) and Paula White (T.A.) joined in, one in each group. They recorded the activities so they could keep a database and use them again with the children. The children worked on rhythm, pulse, timbre, dynamics and pitch and there was an emphasis on the children leading and being creative so there was often an improvisatory element to the session. The children were encouraged to demonstrate, solo sing, conduct and talk in front of each other.

After the adult led element Emily went into the library in the nursery and took instruments with her. She then allowed the children to use the instruments freely and with little instruction. The children's musical interactions were observed and they were totally free to explore and be creative. This enabled the 2 year olds to join in with the music too. Occasionally Emily didn't take any instruments in to the library but simply observed the musical play of the children in their free flow time.

For the last 30 minutes of the session Emily met with Tamsin who was leading the project from the Nursery staff point of view. They had time to discuss how things were going and plans for the future.

Towards the end of the project in February 2019 we had a Family Music Day and a CPD event. The Family Day was open to all parents and involved Emily doing activities with the children, staff members bringing in instruments and a drumming instructor coming in and doing some work with the children. The CPD event took part in the Sunshine Room and was led by Emily with Ann Stott (Early Years Music Lead) assisting. All local Early Years workers (nursery workers/childminders/parents/teachers) were invited and it was well attended.

### **The Research Question.**

For each project we have a research question. This is a question that helps to structure and influence the way that the music practitioner works with the children. The research question is devised by the music practitioner and also the Early Years Practitioners/staff at the setting. In this case it was Paula White and Tamsin Williams who were both involved in the project. They suggested that there were a lot of children that found it hard to join in with activities for varying reasons. The research question for Camborne Nursery was:

*“What impact does music have in encouraging levels of a child's involvement in an Early Years setting?”*

### **Leuven Scales.**

Tamsin wanted to measure the children's involvement by using the Leuven scale. Emily had used the Leuven scale in a previous project on wellbeing at Truro Nursery and was familiar with how it worked. This time we used the involvement side of the scale.

The Leuven scales are centred in a very child orientated approach when observing children and place the emphasis firmly on prioritising the child's engagement and wellbeing. The scale has been devised by researchers at Leuven University in Leuven, Belgium under the guidance of Professor Laevers. There are five levels; Level one rates the wellbeing or involvement of the child are extremely low and level five as extremely high. We have used the scale primarily to observe the children's involvement

and although it only gives a snapshot of the child's behaviour, it has been useful to show how the children have reacted to the adult led activities.

As well as using the Leven Scales Emily also observed and made notes on how the children joined in with the activities. This could be with talking, eye contact, working with the other children, staying interested in the activities or maintaining attention in the circle.



## **The children.**

The adult led activities involved all of the 3 and 4 year olds. We chose five children who found it particularly hard to engage with others and focussed our observations on them. The children in this case study have been named "T", "K", "A", "M" and "J". "T" had been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum at the age of 2.

### Child 1: "T".

"T" has a great enthusiasm for music. He particularly responds to loud sounds and dramatic playing. He loves singing and although didn't vocalise would stand in the middle of the circle during any singing activities and dance. "T" wouldn't join in with

any of the activities at the start of the project. He would spend most of the session playing in the rest of the sunshine room, not engaging at all with the other children. Here are some of the examples (chronologically) of how this changed throughout the project, taken from my observations:

**Week 2.** *"T" spent the whole time playing in the rest of the room and didn't join in at all. He is very busy and quite animated at times but doesn't communicate much at all with the staff or other children.*

**Week 3.** *In circle time "T" danced in the middle of the circle whilst the children were singing. Tamsin said that he responds to singing and will come over/join in when the singing starts- in his own way, not singing. "T" joined in with "roll the ball" by playing with the ball and rolling it back to me when I passed it to him. He didn't join in with anything else during the session.*

**Week 4.** *"T" responded really well to the clarinet playing. He stayed in the circle (standing up and moving) and only moved out of the circle when I stopped playing. He moves a lot to the singing in general.*

**Week 5.** *"T" joined in with the walking through the jungle song. He stood in the middle of the circle and didn't talk or sing but he liked being part of the group. He was interested in Chop Chop but didn't join in. He did play with the vegetables after.*

**Week 7.** *"T" was very upset at the start. He didn't want to join in at all but was interested when we started using the scrunchie. He came over and stood in the middle of the circle and joined in for most of the singing, moving to the music but not vocalising.*

**Week 8.** *"T" sat in the circle at the end of Emma's circle time (Emma Short, Head Teacher). This is the first time I have seen him do this. Unfortunately, after this he was quite upset and didn't want to engage with the music. His Mother had said that he was out of sorts today. At the end of the session he did lie down though and listen to the warm down music which was wonderful! He also turned and half waved at me as he left and gave eye contact which is the first time he has done this. The scrunchie did interest him this week but I think he was frustrated in general.*

**Week 9.** *"T" joined in more than usual and stood in front of the saxophone listening. In the library "T" came up to me and thought about touching the instrument.*

**Week 12.** *"T" joined in for the whole session! He played a percussion instrument, he moved around with it, he stood in the centre of the circle for all of the circle songs (with another child). He also very briefly took my hand and lay down on the floor momentarily for the warm down. He loved the Harry Potter theme tune and rocked and smiled whilst the music was playing. There was a lot of loud (ish!) music in this session and Tamsin feels that "T" responds very well to lots of noise. Perhaps this is why he was so engaged? Paula had noticed before the music session started that he was very good at sharing the food toys that he had got out with other children, so he was having a good day.*

**Week 13.** *"T" loves the singing in the circle time with Tamsin. He walked away at the start of the adult led but came back when the lycra came out and was involved in most of the session. Briefly held onto the lycra a couple of times.*

**Week 14.** *"T" came and sat on a chair. Was involved for the whole session. Chose a pepper. He lay down with the children at the end and enjoyed standing/lying on the lycra whilst the other children shook it.*

**Week 16.** *"T" stayed for the whole session. He said a word (didn't make a note of what it was!) at the start. Very unusual! He has been talking more in general in the nursery. He took over the djembe session! He was very keen to drum, so I let him take the lead. The children moved in time to his drumming. It was fantastic to see him so engaged with the music and confident to join in with the others. He held hands with me and another child in "Jump Jim".*

**Week 17b:** *"T" was having a bad day so he wasn't able to join in with the adult led activities in group 1. This led to the other children being a bit more disruptive- they are often unsettled if he is struggling. It begs the question "is it appropriate to mix a child with autism with other children in the adult led, if it impairs the other children's ability to engage with and enjoy the activities?" Inevitably the answer is "yes", of course, it is important for the child to be encouraged to engage with other children and he particularly loves music and responds to music. However, today the other children did not get the attention they deserve and some of those children have their own challenges so need that input and focus just as much but in a different way. Do we encourage the autistic child to do music therapy instead? Or do we just feel pleased that music is a way to engage him with the other children in his class so we should continue to keep all the children together? An area where EY music and MT meet and interesting to be aware of the issues here." I discussed the use of a music therapist with Emma, the Nursery Head.*

**Week 19.** *"T" has made huge progress since I last saw him. He held hands in circle time with the other children. He tried to join in with the signing during the singing. In the adult led he was engaged for the whole session. He tapped his toes to "tap your toes". He rocked to the pulse whilst the other children sang. "T" tapped his claves, on the floor with the others, stopped at the correct times. Smiley and calm. He held onto the lycra at the end.*

**Week 20.** *"T" sat on a chair in the circle time. He held hands with the other children and even joined in with the signing.*

"T" really responded to the music sessions. It helped that he is a very musical child and also that he had a huge amount of support from Paula and Tamsin. They were very good at updating me on his progress and also helping me to understand what made him respond and stimulated him. The difference by the end of the 20 weeks was huge and at the start he really kept himself apart from the adult led sessions, whereas at the end he was an active part of them.

Child 2: "K".

"K" was very shy at the start. He was chosen as one of the five children to be observed because he really didn't want to talk in front of the others, sing, lead or often play an instrument. Here are some of his observations over the weeks.

**Week 2.** *"K" didn't want to join in at all. Sat and watched. This surprised Tamsin as she didn't expect him to be so shy.*

**Week 3.** *"K" didn't want to engage much but did enjoy playing the claves.*

**Week 4.** *"K" was quiet but joined in. He didn't want to conduct.*

**Week 5.** *"K" was engaged this week although quite shy. He was slow to start joining in.*

**Week 6.** *"K" was engaged and joined in with all of the actions. He didn't want to speak in front of the others. I had a lot of feedback from Tamsin about the drumming day. "K" got a lot out of it and was very good at keeping a pulse.*

**Week 7.** *"K" wanted to be a snowman. Even though he wasn't chosen he stood up to join in which is a huge step forward in his confidence.*

**Week 8.** *"K" was very involved. He was a conductor and played the tambourine.*

**Week 12.** *"K" was enjoying the session and joined in.*

**Week 13.** *"K" very confident today. Suggested a "boys voice" for the first song. Doesn't often talk in front of the others.*

**Week 14.** *"K" did the pulse brilliantly for chop chop.*

**Week 15.** *"K" spoke a bit and was keen to get involved. He loved listening to the clarinet and helped me to put it away. Much more confident than usual.*

**Week 16.** *"K" said "banana pie" when prompted. Also led the drumming.*

**Week 17.** *"K" was very confident. He put himself forward to lead activities and sings and talks a lot more.*

**Week 20.** *"K" engaged throughout the whole session. No longer any different to the others in terms of engagement.*

"K" really blossomed throughout the sessions. He grew less shy and the main difference was that he started to vocalise in front of the other children. His involvement in the drumming workshop and his excellent sense of pulse shows that he is a musical child who responds well to music but initially just felt very self-conscious.

Child 3: "A".

"A" was chosen to be observed as he hardly spoke to staff members and other children. He seemed to be enjoying the adult led sessions from the start, but he didn't like to do anything by himself and had to be encouraged to join in. At the start of the 20 weeks he was in the process of getting an I.E.P.

**Week 2.** *"A" enjoyed the adult led but was very quiet.*

**Week 3.** *"A" joined in with roll the ball.*

**Week 4.** *"A" was very shy but he gives lot of eye contact and is smiley. He seems to enjoy the music activities in an observational way. He didn't want to conduct.*

**Week 6.** *"A" was engaged and joined in with all of the actions. He didn't want to speak in front of the others.*

**Week 7.** *Before the adult led, "A" and "M" had baskets on their heads and were playing. We sang the peekaboo song together. "ID" overheard and came over to join in with the singing. "A" was very engaged and enjoying himself. He still wasn't confident enough to talk in front of the others. "A" joined in with the activities in the library after the adult led.*

**Week 10.** *"A" was very involved today and loved wearing the cape. He didn't have the confidence to talk in front of the others but enjoyed joining in.*

**Week 12.** *"A" very engaged. He led the conga and was happy to play his shaker in front of everyone. He stood in the centre of the circle, he didn't want to make an animal sound but he was happy to do actions for us to copy.*

**Week 14.** *"A" said the words to chop chop loudly! He enjoyed counting the crocodiles under the sea. Tamsin mentioned that his confidence has grown and he has started to talk to the staff members.*

**Week 15.** *"A" marched a pulse for us to join in with. Barked in the Doggy game!*

**Week 16.** *"A" was able to say "apple pie" in the warmup. Very rarely talks in front of the others.*

**Week 20.** *"A" fully engaged for the whole session. Has the same involvement levels as the other children.*

It was really exciting to see "A"'s confidence develop throughout the 20 weeks. He really grew in confidence and was able to talk to us and the other children by the end of the project. He enjoyed the sessions from the start, and it was lovely to see him change from happily watching what was going on to actively leading and engaging with the others.

Child 4: "M".

"M" was chosen to be observed as he has English as a second language. He didn't talk much at all and quite often couldn't understand what was happening so chose to sit and observe rather than join in. Paula is an expert in Makaton and used signing a lot to help him. In the early weeks Paula had to assist him in all ways- even when he hit a drum she would have to hold his hands. He was very self-conscious in front of the others in the group and was embarrassed to participate.

**Week 4.** *"M" was much more engaged this week and was doing some of the actions.*

**Week 7.** *"M" sang his name and wanted to be a snowman. He seemed to understand the instructions more clearly.*

**Week 8.** *"M" joined in more this week. He enjoyed playing the tambourine in front of everyone but needed to be encouraged to do the actions in the songs. He did do them after some demonstrating.*

**Week 10.** *"M" wore a cape and did some of the actions in Chest.*

**Week 13.** *"M" looked at the stuffed cow and said "cow"- very unusual for him to talk.*

**Week 15.** *"M" had the bone in the Doggy game and said a quiet Woof Woof! Also said his name in Ke la la. Getting much more vocal.*

**Week 16.** *"M" drummed on the djembe with Paula holding his hands. Managed one beat by himself! Wanted to stand in the middle of the circle for Jump Jim. Said "Pie" in the cherry pie song.*

**Week 17b.** *"M" led the starts and stops- didn't need any support."*

**Week 19.** *"M" spoke to me at the start. Mimed the circle time actions and started to try and sing the circle time song that Tamsin sings with him every day. M chose an action without being prompted. When the children heard a plane outside he did the Makaton sign for aeroplane. He joined in with "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" in Zoom.*

**Week 20.** *"M" repeating words back to us. Enjoying the music sessions now.*

By the end of the 20 weeks "M" was much happier in the music sessions. He enjoyed participating and was happy to lead and play an active role. This was a huge difference from the beginning of the project.



Child 5, "J".

"J" often found it hard to focus in the circle time. He didn't want to participate in the musical activities and often turned to face the wall to show this. He was very easily distracted and found it especially hard when "T" was having a bad day, making it less likely for "J" to engage and more likely for him to want to play elsewhere in the room.

**Week 3.** *"J" joined in but less so.*

**Week 4.** *"J" was very vocal and excited but when asked to suggest an idea he turned to face the wall.*

**Week 5.** *"J" attention was lost in Chop Chop but he loved moving with the singing. He often turns away from the group.*

**Week 6.** *"J" was in the second group this time and it changed the dynamic. They were more restless than usual whereas the first group were very calm. "J" joined in with everything and didn't turn away from the group and look at the wall. He wasn't confident enough to talk in front of the others. Tamsin suggested that he was more involved because "T" was away so he wasn't distracted.*

**Week 7.** *"J" wasn't very focused at the start but loved playing with the scrunchie and was very engaged.*

**Week 8.** *"J" was very involved.*

**Week 9.** *"J" was engaged this week. He lost interest at the end of the session.*

**Week 10.** *"J" was very involved. He didn't want to wear a cape but he made some brilliant alien sounds and actions.*

**Week 12.** *"J" behaved very well and his attention didn't waver. Was this due to the extra adult?*

**Week 13.** *"J" wasn't so involved, gets put off when "T" is around and not participating. Ended up being less involved than "T". He got more engaged towards the end.*

**Week 14.** *"J" chose a veg. Was engaged for the whole session.*

**Week 15.** *"J" sat and was engaged for the whole session. Still not confident enough to talk in front of the others. Was the only child in the first group who didn't want to march in time to the music.*

**Week 16.** *"J" said "chocolate". He was involved in the whole session and didn't move away from the group.*

**Week 17.** *"J" was not confident enough to vocalise "woof" but did on someone else's turn. He is still very self-conscious. He was happy to hold the dog/bone though and be part of the group.*

**Week 17b.** *"J" behaviour much better, stays engaged for the whole session but still doesn't want to lead.*

By the end of the project “J” would involve himself much more. He was able to focus for most of the session but found it hard to concentrate for the whole thing. It made a huge difference to him who was in his group as he was easily distracted by other children. He was noticeably calmer when there were more adults present in the room supporting.

**Leuven scores:**

Child	September level for involvement	March level for involvement
T	2	3
K	3	4
A	3	4
M	2	3.5
J	2	3

The Leuven scores went up for all children involved. I don’t feel that they really show a fair representation of how much more engaged all five children were at the end of the 20 weeks, although it is still useful to track them.

**Music open morning.**

As part of the project we had a music open morning where we invited parents to come into the nursery to join in with music activities. Nine parents came in to take part in the adult led activities. Lots of other parents came in to join with other musical activities and several parents came in to look around the nursery and ended up staying for the whole morning. One of the governors brought in her ukulele and sang to the children. Staff encouraged her to make this a regular event as the children loved it and they joined in playing on her spare ukulele. Paul, a local percussionist, comes to the setting once a term and organised it so his session was part of the opening morning. He did some great drumming activities. He explored pulse, starting and stopping and offered the children a wide range of percussion instruments. He played guitar and hang. The children were also encouraged to dance and sing/talk into the microphone. Carrie Richards (teacher) brought in her violin and let the children have a go on it. Paula got the singing bags out and sang with the children and there were instruments in the garden for the children to play with. The whole morning was a huge success and enjoyed by all.

**CPD event.**

We held a CPD event towards the end of the project at the end of the nursery day. It was attended by many local child minders/parents/teachers/nursery nurses and others and was successful in showing people what we do within the CMST Early Years Music

Education Service. It showcased the success we had at Camborne and gave the attendees some training and ideas for their own Early Years Music.

## **Conclusions.**

The project was very successful at Camborne Nursery. The staff work to an extremely high standard and were keen to embrace the music and this was key in creating a legacy. There is much more awareness of music at the setting and an increased interest and understand of music therapy and the benefits of encouraging music in the Early Years. Tamsin used the songs regularly with the children and the staff have a database of all of the songs and games learned. Tamsin particularly used singing as a way of getting the children's attention and this worked well to encourage them to come and join in with circle time in a calm manner.

Emma encouraged all of the staff to sit in with an adult led session so that they all understood what was going on.



Mrs Emily Garrod

I am primarily an instrumentalist and 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 the Bristol Music Service 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 working in Early Years music started about ten years ago when I took a course run by Susan Young. I was inspired by my fellow course members, many whom had been working in Early Years settings for a long time and found that I loved the energy, diversity and improvisatory nature of the work. I am very excited to be part of the Early Years team for the Cornwall Music Service Trust and am loving working with very young children at an age where music is such an incredible source of communication, fun, learning and comfort to them.

Mrs Tamsin Williams.

My name is Tamsin and after completing my degree in Science in Exercise I completed the Early Years School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme to become a teacher. I then achieved my masters degree in Professional Development. I have been teaching at Camborne Nursery School for 10 years. I have been working part time (3 days a week) for the last couple of years after I had my children (2 and 1) and am currently teaching the 3 and 4 year olds.

Mrs Paula White

My name is Paula and in 2006 I started volunteering at the Sunshine Room parent and baby group we have here at Camborne Nursery School whilst I completed my NVQ qualifications. After this time my daughter started school and I was offered to work as a supply teaching assistant in the Nursery School and then as a permanent teaching assistant. I currently work full time in the 3 and 4 year old class.