Transition - Using Music to Enable Positive Change
Report

KEY:

MMS: Music Making SENse   **TMTS:** The Michael Tippet School

TA: Teaching Assistant   **LY:** Livity School

SEN: Special Educational Needs   **PECS:** Picture Exchange Communication System

This report was completed by Kirsty Mees (Co-director of Music Making SENse). I (Kirsty) was not actively involved in the project delivery however I am familiar with the settings and was involved in the project planning. This report reflects my interpretations of the data.

Introduction

'They get quite excited about music, but it has a calming effect too … they responded to the music and concentrated. They concentrated well because they wanted to be doing it'

Class Teacher, LY

Transition - Using Music to Enable Positive Change is a project reflecting the complexities around transition and change for young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and aims to illustrate the potential benefits of musical interventions and emphasise the need for support systems for SEN settings and individuals. Transition in this project looks predominantly at the move between schools, from primary to secondary, which is a big part of a young person's schooling life and can present many exciting as well as challenging experiences. The project saw many successes, individual achievements, as well as hurdles and challenges, and although this report is only a snapshot of the participants experiences, it provides a rich and meaningful narrative of potential for progress and of overcoming the challenges surrounding transition.

There are many changes involved in the transition process which can be overwhelming and confusing for young people with SEN. The project activities and timeline also meant that MMS needed to sensitively plan for a particular cohort of young people facing further challenges as they attempted to navigate the ongoing effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. Many of the participants transitioned through social restriction, lockdown, constant changes to routine, and social isolation, with potential and ongoing adverse effects.

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MMS have worked with many young people who have transitioned between schools throughout their role with various primary and secondary SEN settings. MMS have found that often the music sessions across these settings remain a constant aspect of the transition process. For this project the ML was present in both settings and was able to identify different responses from familiar participants, providing vital information to new staff and support to the participants in connecting and engaging with others and with the musical experiences.

The Project highlights some of processes involved in transition and the potential for musical experiences to support and reduce the impact of adverse reactions, resulting in individuals connecting with others, sharing ideas and preferences, making choices, taking turns, enjoying and participating together, celebrating peers, building confidence and musical skills. As a project representing a much wider theme, Transition - Using Music to Enable Positive Change has been successful in achieving its overall aims and MMS have gained valuable insight into the benefits as well as challenges faced by young people with SEN and the need for projects such as this to be further explored and developed.

Project Activities

The project delivered sessions to students from two SEN schools; Livity School (LY) - MMS primary school partner and Michael Tippett (TMTS) – MMS secondary partner. Session delivery took place from 01/09/21 - 31/12/22 within school terms. 432 sessions were delivered on a weekly basis during school term time, with 8 sessions per week. Sessions were 40-60 minutes in length. The project engaged 153 participants, with 116 core members. Within the core members 7 participants were tracked across their transition from primary to secondary school. Working with Year 5-8 students was prioritised, however the wider participant group included KS1-4. All participants had Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) or Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD). Sessions were supported by a minimum of 3 staff. Sessions occurred weekly led by ML. There were 2 transition visits for LY Year 6 pupils arranged, coordinated, and led by the ML at TMTS. There were also 2 online sharing celebrations which occurred at the end of the project.

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The Project Outcomes

There were two outcomes explored across the project described below:

Outcome 1 - Social

To develop new and rekindle existing peer-to-peer relationships. Social interaction will be encouraged through facilitating student: communication, turn-taking and group music making, expression and incorporation of student choices into activities.

Outcome 1 reflects an awareness of (i) the potential for musical experiences to facilitate and promote communicative and social responses (ii) specific activities and opportunities which may support transition. Transition often requires developing new relationships with peers and staff, connecting and interacting as a group, communicating needs and preferences and accepting others. For individuals with SEN these processes can be confusing and challenging. Results highlight the many layers involved in social interaction and presents examples of unique experiences, progress, as well as hurdles, differing for each individual. Despite challenges, results are consistent across the two settings with many examples of peer awareness, interaction, celebration, turn taking and communication developing and extending across the project.

Data sources for the project included ML written observations, verbal feedback, baseline surveys, written reflections from ML and staff, planning adaptions by ML and termly reviews. One of the learning points derived from the data was the impact providing opportunities to practise social and communicative skills such as turn taking, choice making and peer interaction within a motivating and engaging environment can have on supporting transition. Achievements in turn taking often resulted in extended peer interaction, and achievements in choice making often resulted in extended communication, autonomy, confidence, and expression.

This was facilitated by the ML providing differentiated learning activities and having support systems in place to encourage and promote attempts and success with these social and communicative tasks. Support systems included visual and communicative supports such as PECS, visual choice cards, social stories, now and next boards, choosing activities with the number of activities tailored to the individual's needs as well as other support systems utilised by the setting. The ML would reflect on each participants engagement in these social tasks and accessibility in using the learning supports. Adaptions would be made where needed to promote extension and achievement.

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VIGNETTE 1 – Examples of participant social responses

VIGNETTE 1
Examples of Outcome 1 – Social   **Based on ML Written Observations**
LY - ML: 'In Term 3 I encouraged all the students to choose who was next for a drum solo and they did this without visuals and considered the choice briefly before making their selection'   ML offers opportunities for the groups to choose a peer to have the next turn. This occurs once participants have had the opportunity to practise making different choices i.e., instruments, activities, how they would like to participate, and are often supported by PECS and choosing boards. Music itself appears to support turn taking as it is a motivating experience which the participants often want to be involved in and share their preferences.
TMTS – ML: 'RI made really clear choices in the sessions and from lots of options e.g. she was shown 6+ different scarves before choosing the colour she wanted. Same with drums'   The ML structures and tailors the choosing activities to individual needs and incorporates interests and preferences, allowing time for participants to respond and choose how they would like to engage in the interaction.
TMTS: ML describes one participant who enjoys dancing enthusiastically throughout the session. They seem to be unaware of whose turn it may be and joins in on every turn.   **TMTS – ML: 'Some movement, smiling and dancing from RF. They were moving freely around the classroom most of today'. 'They didn't tend to respond to their turn but would complete activities (e.g. saying particular prompted words or phrases) on other people's turns'**   Understanding social norms such as turn taking can be complex and the ML supports different levels of engagement to extend understanding and provide opportunities to practise these skills. The ML reflects the balance needed to ensure all participants get to practise the listening and active participation aspects involved in turn taking experiences. The data presents many different examples of the participants experiences of turn taking.

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LY – ML: 'KA met one of her development goals today as she spontaneously moved closer to TJ & AA to see what they were playing on the iPad'

The ML acknowledges and supports the academic and personal goals of each individual and aims to incorporate these into the musical activities. This is essential in SEN work and may lead to generalisation of skills across subjects and experiences. Musical experiences can offer additional support and promote extension of varying goals as it can be motivating and engaging to the participants.

TMTS – ML: 'HB gets so excited when I arrive; it's his favourite activity of the week. We tried vocal improvising along to some garageband loops today and he enjoyed the groove. He signed that he wanted the mic, held it and then passed it to me to sing into (modelling what I do with him). Also I asked him to help collect the shakers for the first time and he did this really successfully and his peers (TT and RF in particular) helped by coming over to him and there were good interactions.

Results suggest that there are many different layers to social interaction. All attempts were acknowledged, valued and celebrated by the ML. Practise and repetition can lead to extended and new levels of interaction and communication. This example also highlights the enjoyment this participant gained from the music and how they shared their musical skills and preferences. Music learning has been supported and achievements can be observed.

TMTS – ML: 'YS Came and sat with the group whilst spinning a basketball cushion. I sang about spinning the ball and then did some drum rolls with vocal sirens whilst she span and she started smiling and kicking her feet in excitement'

TMTS – ML: 'YS Obsessed with a telephone toy … so we matched some sounds to it and incorporated it into the solos'

LY – ML: 'Great class because OJ was calm, engaged and sustained this throughout … I integrated their interest in being a ballerina into their turn'

There are many examples across the project where the ML adapts spontaneously to engage individuals by incorporating their interests or current object or behaviour into the experience. Connecting with the individual where they are at that moment and encouraging them to communicate and share their preferences appears to engage participants who often then join in other activities as part of the group. This connects to the different layers of social interaction and the need for supported and differentiated learning opportunities to support broader social engagement.

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TMTS – ML: 'BA has mastered how to hold his drumstick and was smiling away very pleased with themselves. With staff encouragement they tried a few louder bangs on the drum and smiled at the response they got from others'

There have been many musical moments across the project with extension of musical skills which appears to occur when participants are calm, connected, acknowledged, and feel comfortable. Participants appear to have increased motivation when achievements and attempts are celebrated particularly when this is by their peers. Examples of being very aware as well as sensitive to peer responses are prominent across the data. This leads to Outcome 2 looking at barriers to participation and interacting with the musical experiences which may occur for young people with SEN particularly when experiencing transition.

Outcome 2 - Personal

To enable positive engagement in group music making through the use of a CLICKS approach i.e., supporting achievement and consistency, reducing FEAR and barriers to learning triggered by transition.

Transition is a complex process and requires adapting to new environments, people, approaches, care, routines, peers, sensory input as well as cognitive processes relating to memory, executive functioning, emotional understanding and managing disruption and constant change. These processes are often challenging for SEN individuals and can result in frustration, Low self-esteem, anxiety, and negative reactions which can impact learning progression as well as the welfare of the individuals and those around them.

MMS programmes aim to support these challenges through applying a particular learning approach developed by the MMS team as a result of discussions, reflections, evaluations and observations across multiple settings. This learning approach aims to consolidate the challenges faced and the potential for support, into an accessible format and guide for their practice and programmes. The learning approach was developed prior to the project and is referred to as a **'CLICKS approach'** and was a fundamental part of the projects planning, design, reflection, and evaluation.

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The **CLICKS** approach involves principles which connect to the acronym (**C**onsistency, **L**earning, **I**ncluded, **C**alm, **K**now what to expect, **S**upported) with the focus on implementing strategies encompassing these principles to reduce **FEAR** (**F**rustration, **E**steem (Low self-), **A**nxiety, **R**eaction) and promote achievement and learning. Through structured group music making we can create **Consistency** and **Calm**, enabling participants to **Know what to expect,** increase participant autonomy by **Including** them in their learning through choice, and **Support** individual and group needs so that **Learning**: **CLICKS.**

Observations and feedback outline how these principles were embedded into the delivery and planning of the musical activities and results highlight examples of reduction of **FEAR** for participants and the impact this can have on engagement, connection, communication, interaction, and more broadly on transition. Reflection against the **CLICKS** principles was apparent throughout the data as the ML considered their own practice and implemented strategies both in the moment and from sessions to session to support all participants, particularly those who were experiencing **FEAR**. Results suggest planning individual and group strategies around these principles can have a significant impact on not only individual achievement but also wellbeing, leading to positive engagement in group music making.

The CLICKS approach was also implemented within the projects design and activities including (i) the same ML across both settings for all sessions (ii) the ML's prior knowledge of the settings, staff and many of the pupils (iii) the musical programme involving repeated repertoire enabling familiarity and incremental progress as well as choice making and inclusion of individual interests (iv) consistency in the lesson structure, feedback and interaction, all reinforced by visual support systems. The CLICKS approach became a valuable tool in the planning and programming of the project and results highlight the potential application of the approach in interventions for SEN and transition.

VIGNETTE 2 – Examples of participants personal responses

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VIGNETTE 2
Examples of Outcome 2 – Personal   **Based on ML Written Observations**
LY - ML: 'JS was a little excited so they participated in bursts and then would sit away for some calm time; this was a good intervention and meant that they participated in a more considered way'   **TMTS – ML: 'LC overstimulated to start with but by distracting them with activities when they wanted to engage helped with their regulation… 'They were using words rather than sounds more during the latter part of the lesson as they regulated further'**   **LY - ML: describes one participant who appeared quite anxious each week about the start of the microphone section of the session. In the past the participant had often become quite upset. They had now adopted what appeared to be a strategy of taking a break to manage their anxiety, asking to go to the bathroom at the start of this section. ML mentioned this to a staff member who was happy this had been recognised and the team respected the participants repetition of this response. When they returned to the session they often joined in the task, taking the microphone, and quietly singing a full song. They would smile when offered encouragement.**   **LY - ML: 'ON participated in bursts which is great as they really enjoy demonstrating what they can do, but they quickly became overstimulated and needed a break after a few minutes'**   **TMTS: ML describes one participant seeking attention through negative responses which often escalated. Calmly and consistently the ML and staff provided a space slightly away from the group to allow the participant to re-focus. They would then provide encouragement and praise for all attempts at positive engagement which enabled the participant to engage in a more positive way.**   **LY - ML: 'IB – Sat by the door; joined about halfway through the lesson. He has trouble transitioning spaces, sitting in the library opposite. However, once he was in the room he appeared content, no signs of distress or not wanting to be there'**   These examples represent differing needs and challenges experienced by the participants in the group sessions. The ML consistently supported the students, respecting their preferences, encouraging participation, and providing a way to access the sessions. Examples highlight the application of the CLICKS principles such as aiming to provide a calm learning space by being consistent in managing reactions, providing student breaks, respecting different responses, and ensuring participants felt

included by using the musical tools and activities to motivate and encourage participation as well as differentiating the learning tasks to promote and celebrate achievements.

LY - ML: 'MO a little tentative about touching objects but given time will try things like the guitar. MO enjoys the feel of sound vibrating so we played guitar and iPad with the instrument or speaker touching the chair and she would move and dance, shaking her head'

TMTS – ML: 'RI was very determined to play the tambourine by themselves during their percussion solo which I could tell by how they tried to get the instrument in position themselves. I requested TA to continue to give RI space as he was absolutely determined, and did it!'

LY - ML: 'RA showing some sound sensitivity today but equally loudly vocalising into the microphone unless I sang "I like to move it, move it"'. Later in the project ML describes changes in RA's auditory sensitivity: 'Whilst they still don't like quick bursts of sound, they are able to tolerate them much more now. They will put their hands to their ears and look at me and as I adapt by either stopping or quietening RA will consistently re-engage with the activity'

LY - ML: 'RJ was calling out and laughing as they played the ocean drum (staff and I had not seen this reaction before). RJ also tried to grab the ocean drum back if it was shared with a neighbouring student'

LY - ML: 'KA was trying to keep their hands flat and open when drumming. Tactile sensitivity impacted KA's preference to explore drumming previously'

TMTS – ML: 'DM did some fantastic drumming today. Staff had encouraged her to play with hands in previous weeks however today I gave her two sticks and she played the drum with both hands moving with alternate motion and big arm movements. She was really determined and played many streams of loud drumming, also some with her hands, some with sticks whilst standing up to get more arm movement and some sat down (as she can be a little unsteady). She was loving it – smiling and laughing and looking at others for recognition'

TMTS – ML: 'AM was copying lots of words today. It was their birthday today and when I wished them a happy birthday they copied back "birthday". This follows a pattern of them saying and singing words in the lesson more often - as well as copying starts, stops, drum rolls and short rhythmic patterns - and assimilating new words quicker. Compared to the start of the year they are more attentive in lessons and far less distracted'

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These examples are just a snapshot of the many musical moments occurring throughout the project. We see varied responses to the musical experiences including positive changes, increased participation, extended musical responses and vocalisations, as well as sensory needs, many of which became less adverse over time. We also see the participants engaging, enjoying themselves with their peers in an ensemble setting; highlighting the potential for social and communication development and in supporting transition. The use of the microphone was also a significant factor in increased and extended vocalisations and singing development.

Data Analysis

Data collected was predominantly qualitative and included:

(i)   ML written observations after each session
(ii)   Transcribed verbal feedback from ML termly
(iii)   Written reflections from ML outlining informal feedback from staff occurring within and after sessions
(iv)   Baseline surveys completed by teachers at the beginning and end of the project – Analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods
(v)   Review and planning notes / adaptions by ML

Data analysis began with an outcomes approach involving the evaluator reading through all data, coding for repeated themes which connected to the broader outcomes. Themes were assigned codes and examples were matched to these themes from across the data sources. This process had some challenges around the amount of data and the broader outcomes which encompassed many areas including transition, social, communicative and music responses and strategies, challenges, and effective practise. This resulted in multiple themes covering a variety of areas which were at times difficult to navigate.

This required a repeated process of consolidating the themes into learning points and matching these to the broader outcomes, reducing the number of learning points overall. Once this process was complete specific examples were allocated to the learning points reflective of different sources (Triangulation) i.e. ML and staff feedback, and then consolidated into an evidence source from which conclusions could be draw. A quantitative analysis of the baseline surveys was also included in the data analysis highlighting reoccurring themes within the three focus questions of the survey.

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There were some areas of data collection we were not able to complete due to operational hurdles and some significant changes which impacted the timeline and project activities. These were discussed with the Youth Music team during the project. Video and photo observations were not able to be collected. These additional forms of data would have added to the projects evidence base providing a broader source of data and this is acknowledged as a limitation within the data source. However, on reflection, data analysis is a complex and time driven task and adding other forms of data would have made the process difficult to approach.

The SoI assessment tool was also proposed in the data collection methods, however, MMS found early on in the project that informal feedback from staff, written observations, and reflections from ML were naturally being assessed against the CLICKS principles which provided a trajectory of the potential impact of the project and reflected the outcomes, providing clear examples and evidence and highlighted both challenges and progress.

Results - Learning Points

Final analysis and interpretation of the data resulted in a number of learning points listed below. ***VIGNETTE 1 and 2*** highlight examples of these learning points and they are also reflected in the Baseline Survey and Case Study analysis below.

(i)   CLICKS and FEAR; A consistent learning approach, reflective strategies and adaptive practice can reduce anxiety, supporting wellbeing and resulting in individual achievement and learning.
(ii)   Involving young people in their learning through opportunities to make choices and share preferences can promote autonomy, communication, interaction, and social connection.
(iii)   Musical experiences motivate young people and promote enjoyment, enthusiasm, and connections in meaningful ways which can be adapted to individual needs and preferences.
(iv)   The ML experience, flexibility and consistency was vital in navigating the challenges presented and in promoting strategies representing individual preferences.
(v)   Turn taking was a fundamental element of the musical programming and vital in supporting social awareness and interaction. Through tailored support and consistent facilitation participants had many moments of success and the overall impact of these opportunities can be seen across the project.
(vi)   Peer engagement is vital in transition and involves many layers of social understanding which can be challenging for SEN pupils.

(vii)   Responses to music and ensemble experiences can vary significantly from session to session and are impacted by multiple factors including anxiety around transition, sensory processing, and social dynamics.

(viii)   Music may be vital in providing a transition support intervention for young people with SEN.

These learning points highlight the significant impact of the project overall and the potential for musical experiences to support and guide SEN settings in their approach to transition. It is important to note that benefits and achievements within the project occurred despite significant challenges and necessary changes with the project design.

This is reflected by the ML in *VIGNETTE 3*

VIGNETTE 3
ML Feedback
'One final learning point was to be flexible to elements beyond our control' 'Reflection, tenacity and flexibility have been essential to enabling the project' 'By putting the needs of the participants central to the design we were able to introduce changes that still promoted a CLICKS approach and supported the young people to thrive and progress' 'Despite changes to schooling and key personnel in their lives, the participants still advanced in their social interactions, communication, and musical skills, and it was the consistency and agency they found within music that enabled this'

Baseline Survey Findings

Baseline data was collected for a selected number of pupils from each setting at the beginning and end of the project. This provided valuable insight into (i) the challenges individuals may face impacting transition (ii) engagement with musical experiences and ways in which this may have changed or been impacted by the project activities. Teachers were asked to give bullets points on three areas involving (i) Responses to peers in the music sessions (ii) Responses to the musical experiences (iii) Sensory needs.

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VIGNETTE 4 summarises these responses.

VIGNETTE 4
Summary of Baseline Survey Responses
(i) Responses to peers in the music sessions Initial feedback focused on challenges around peer interactions and turn taking which highlights the significance of these areas in social learning and transition. Challenges noted related to some participants experiencing anxiety and overstimulation in peer situations, less awareness of peers, as well as difficulty waiting to have a turn in a group activity. End of project surveys highlight the changes which occurred for many of the participants in these areas. Challenges still persisted for some, however, there were many examples of peer acceptance, participation and enjoyment of the turn taking process, and helping and celebrating peer achievements.
(ii) Responses to the musical experiences Initial feedback highlights enjoyment being expressed in many different ways, such as smiling, body movements, excitement, instrumental play and vocalisations. There appeared to be fluctuations in engagement and participation. End of project data sees extended musical expression and new musical learning as well as more consistency in engagement and participation.
(iii) Sensory Needs Initial feedback describes tactile and auditory sensory sensitivities impacting participation. This includes fixation on particular instrumentation, as well as adverse reactions to some sounds. End of project data presents examples of extended engagement when adaptions were made by ML to support varying ways of instrumental use, access to particular instruments, and incorporation of interests and preferences into the musical experiences. Visual supports and providing moments to have a break and return to the session also supported extended participation.

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Example of Baseline Data – OJ

At the beginning of the Project OJ was in Year 6 at Livity school. OJ attended the music sessions for short times at the start of the project. Teachers outlined social and sensory challenges to do with interacting with others and auditory sensitivity leading to anxiety in group sessions. Staff comments suggest OJ anxiety was triggered by peer situations, and she would become overwhelmed wanting to leave and at times this would escalate to negative behaviours.

At the end of the project as OJ entered into Year 7 at TMTS the ML and staff feedback outlines OJ being much more comfortable and confident in the music sessions with new positive interactions with peers and enjoying the process of turn taking. OJ often stayed for the whole session supported with movement breaks where needed. Challenges around transition and changing schools are still noted for OJ but the continuity of the music sessions and same ML has provided an opportunity for OJ to have many positive moments and receive encouragement which was very motivating for her.

VIGNETTE 5: **Case Study - EPS**

VIGNETTE 5
Case Study – EPS
At the beginning of the Project EPS was in Year 6 at LY school. Staff and ML note EPS enjoyment of music, observing peers, playing instruments, and using the microphone, however, EPS often did not want to join music and observed from a different space. This may have been impacted by auditory sensitivity as she sometimes showed sensory responses, anxiety, and overstimulation.   At the end of the project as EPS entered into Year 7 at TMTS the ML and staff note that she was more engaged in the music sessions and very enthusiastic about the activities and turn taking, listening to her peers and appeared completely comfortable with the sessions structure. She expressed this reduction in sensory anxiety through movement, exploration and remaining in the space. ML notes EPS repeating peers responses, extending her social, musical and communication skills. ML also notes EPS extended musical skills responding to musical cues, playing patterns, and the impact following peers can have on developing understanding and ensemble skills.

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VIGNETTE 6 presents data from EPS baseline survey and examples of participation across the project.

VIGNETTE 6		
Baseline Data		
Beginning of Project – EPS Year 6 LY		
Uses PECS, vocalisation and gestures to communicate		
How does the student respond to peers during music sessions:	**How does the student respond to the musical activities:**	**Any sensory, behavioural or needs based responses during first few sessions:**
EPS enjoys seeing her classmates playing with the instruments and mic. She doesn't mind waiting for her turn. When EPS wants to join the activities, she can wait patiently for her turn while is peers' turn.	EPS enjoys music and playing instruments, even when it is loud. EPS not always wants to take part in the activities. Sometimes she observes from her table or the sensory corner.	Sometimes EPS shows some discomfort when the noise is too loud in the classroom. She doesn't require ear defenders or any other strategy. She can join the activities when she feels comfortable to do so.
End of Project – EPS Year 7 TMTS		
How does the student respond to peers during music sessions:	**How does the student respond to the musical activities:**	**Any sensory, behavioural or needs based responses during first few sessions:**
EPS likes music. She will take turns with others and listen to songs that others decided to listen to. She will shine.	She will smile, dance and spin around the room.	EPS will stamp her feet if waiting for too long for her turn.
End of Project – EPS **ML Feedback**		
Give an example/s of how the student interacted with peers during the music sessions.	**Give an example/s of how the student communicated during the music sessions. For example, during activities support turn taking and student choices.**	**Give an example/s of how the student engaged/participated over the project and how this may support transition.**

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EPS pays more attention to others during music sessions as it is one of her favourite activities. She looks at others and will repeat their responses.	EPS will respond independently to instructions like choose, play, faster, slower, quieter, louder, finish. She understands by following others and through repetition.	EPS was able to use different instruments. Follow different songs and copy different patterns. She is able to cope with others choosing songs from a board of 12 options i.e., anxiety is also calmed enough for songs not to be consistent each week.

Examples from across the project – ML Written Feedback

NB Throughout the project there were changes to EPS medication and this is noted as potentially impacting her engagement across the sessions.

Term 1 - LY

'Was sat slightly apart as they've found re-joining school tricky and can have outbursts if not given space to do drawing / activities of their choosing. However, they were intrigued by the microphone so came over for their turn and clearly signalled when they were finished'

Term 2 – LY

Found participating in the music sessions very difficult in Term 2 and did not attend.

Term 3 – LY

'Came into the class from their separate learning room. Staff said they had just started to come into certain lessons for a little while but very much on their own terms. They came in whilst we were using the microphone and took their turn. They showed an interest in the guitar so I gave them some time to play. With both they clearly communicated when they wanted more or had finished. They took part in drumming and stayed until the end of the lesson. Staff were really impressed'

Term 4 – TMTS

'Apart from being triggered by another pupil, they have settled really well. Week 1 they were a little unsure but soon came to join the group once music started and stayed for the lesson. Since then they have participated fully each session. They communicate clearly through vocalising and gesture about what they want, and when they have finished. They have been really calm and when they did become a little agitated, I was able to guide staff to resolve the situation'

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Summary

Through implementing a CLICKS approach involving consistency across the transition process, EPS was able to overcome FEAR and participate and engage with the sessions. EPS was supported to express her needs, frustrations, and level of participation and overtime she built confidence enabling her to communicate and interact within the group experience.

Peer acceptance and connection can occur and develop when FEAR is reduced leading to turn taking and social interactions, which are vital in supporting transition. Through applying a CLICKS approach EPS was able to progress with new learning, social interactions, communication, and musical achievements. The musical experiences provided the motivation to re-engage through an accessible, flexible, and enjoyable format.

Conclusion / Future Considerations

Transition: Using Music to Enable Positive Change concluded with a wealth of data on the musical experiences of individuals with complex needs through transition. Music as we know is universal and an integral part of the human and social experience. It can be therapeutic providing a pathway to connection, communication, and interaction. The music sessions connected peers & staff through turn-taking, promoting choice and facilitating interactions. Through structured group music making the ML was able to motivate and engage the participants, utilising a CLICKS approach to support their needs reducing FEAR, facilitating progression, enabling autonomy, self-expression, confidence, resilience, and positive social interactions. We see a trajectory of learning and interaction for many of the participants and can conclude that musical facilitation can support transition and perhaps in SEN, should be a compulsory part of this process.

The participants needs and wants were at the heart of this project and were facilitated by the ML in flexible, meaningful, and successful ways, utilising varying resources. The project highlights particular approaches and areas which were fundamental to supporting the transition process including (i) opportunities to feedback, make choices and share preferences (ii) opportunities for turn taking to support peer engagement (iii) opportunities for flexible and differentiated musical experiences to build confidence and motivate, promoting enjoyment and participation (iv) the application of a CLICKS approach.

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This project was the first time MMS had analysed the application of the CLICKS approach. As a main outcome of the project, the ML incorporated it into the project planning, design and delivering, and it was considered throughout the reflection and analysis processes. The results suggest that the CLICKS approach is an accessible and beneficial tool which can be utilised in planning and programming for individuals with SEN around transition.

Through sharing the findings of this report, we hope to:

(i)   Explore opportunities to further investigate, research and put into practise musical interventions to support transition for young people with SEN.

(ii)   Share our resources resulting from the project including a lesson plan resource and a 'how to' guide for facilitating feedback from PMLD and SLD students.

(iii)   Engage in further research and promote the practical application of strategies to support SEN participants in guiding and reflecting on the design and implementation of interventions around transition.

(iv)   Provide further information and instigate discussions with relevant organisations and the wider community on the CLICKS approach and how it can be used to support transition.