

Autism Resource Bases Music Project Update

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



PIP BRYAN - LEAD MUSICIAN, LIVERPOOL

"This term we have been working in Our Lady and St Swithin's in the ARC with their three classes, pre formal, semi formal and formal. In the pre formal class we have been using all of our senses to explore sound, and encouraging musical interactions between pupils and others. We have had lots of fun exploring instruments in a sensory environment, linking in with their class tuff tray activities.

We also utilised some ideas from the toolkit, particularly the [Creatability Google Experiments](#) on the interactive whiteboard which one pupil particularly enjoyed. In the semi formal class, pupils have been exploring rhythmic patterns, conducting activities and creating our own piece around one pupil's love of Coronation Street!

In the formal class, we have been utilising the school's set of ukuleles and percussion, learning the 'clave' rhythm and writing our own festive song which will be recorded at the end of the project to be shared as part of their enterprise week. When asked to share their thoughts on the music making, pupils commented: 'fun, great, excited, learning, happy'."

Our [Autism Resource Bases](#) Music Programme completed its first year in July 2023. Funded by Youth Music, made possible by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, our two-year pilot programme is increasing musical opportunities for autistic children and young people in 18 specialist autism resource bases in England.

With our music hub partners in Somerset, Harrow and Liverpool, we have worked in 11 schools so far, including three this term.

Read on to find out how they got on!

"Seeing all the children super engaged and taking part made our day!" - Teacher

DAV SHIEL - LEAD MUSICIAN, HARROW

"We were really sad to end the project at Pathways last week! We spent 8 weeks making music together, exploring song-writing, conducting, and duets between young people and support staff members.

The duets were a great way for young people and staff members to be creative together, and also to work on their shared attention skills. The [Oddball](#) was a huge hit and the school is looking into buying one for themselves, as they felt it encouraged so much more social interaction than they were used to seeing at the school."

ALEX LUPO - LEAD MUSICIAN, SOMERSET

"We've just completed a brilliant 8 week project at Holway Park ARB in Taunton, Somerset. I had the pleasure of working alongside Claire Whitworth who is a brass peripatetic teacher working across Somerset. This was Claire's first experience of working in an Autism setting. Claire did an amazing job of picking up on the fundamental principles of working inclusively and embraced the creative music making process alongside the pupils. The pupils that we worked with all engaged brilliantly and we were able to observe a very clear development in terms of their confidence and musical ability over the course of the 8 week project.

The project focused explicitly on creative music making and all of the sessions, either group or individual sessions had a clear focus on making new music together each week. We explored a lot of young person led improvisation and we observed a marked increase in the young people's capacity to be able to share their thoughts, ideas and suggestions as the project progressed.



"When external providers put that personal touch on their sessions it means so much to all of our children " - Teacher

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www.livemusicnow.org.uk



Each week the pupils would be visibly excited when we would arrive in the base and were really motivated to participate. One pupil in particular grew significantly in confidence. In week 1 he observed from outside of the class room; literally through the window! His confidence grew steadily and by week 8 he was in the centre of the circle conducting other pupils in their music making. We observed this kind of increase in confidence across the board.

One hugely positive outcome from this project has been that several of the pupils from the autism base have begun to participate in Claire's whole class ensemble brass sessions in the mainstream part of the school. This wouldn't have been possible before the project. The hope is very much that the school and Sound Foundation Somerset are now committed to this being in place over the long term.

This was a wonderfully creative and exciting project to have been part of!"

