

Teacher confidence to facilitate children's musical learning and  
development in the Reception Year at school

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## Declaration

I, Julie Digby, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## Abstract

The Reception year occupies a unique position in the English education continua, straddling two contrasting curricula approaches towards teaching and learning. This study sought to address the lack of research into music pedagogy and practice for this particular cohort. Responding to concerns of a reported decreasing visibility of music in the curriculum, this thesis explored teacher confidence in respect of musical learning and development of the children in the Reception class.

Grounded in a circular theoretical framework, developed from the principles of hermeneutic philosophy, this small-scale mixed methods study adopted an explanatory sequential research design. Thus, questionnaire survey data served to provide a broad contextual frame in which to situate a more in-depth study proffered by participant interviews. A quasi-purposive sampling of a particular population of Reception teachers in the East of England provided the questionnaire respondents (n=39), whilst the interview participants (n=8) emerged as a `nested` subset in this mixed methods study.

Findings evidence that some teachers are struggling to incorporate regular opportunities for music teaching and learning in the Reception curricula, due to: (1) internal as well as external constraints and challenges; (2) a bias toward the functional uses of music for extrinsic purposes - such as a vehicle to scaffold other learning - rather than for any intrinsic value; (3) a disconnect between strong personal and comparatively weak professional musical identities as expressed by most of the participants; (4) a reported lack of teacher confidence to develop children's musical learning within the EYFS framework due to poor levels of skills, knowledge and understanding with regard to musical pedagogical practices.

These findings emerge at an opportune time to help inform policy and practice, as research in early childhood music education becomes more prevalent, further to the recent changes to the Ofsted framework (2019), as well as the forthcoming publication of the revised National Plan for Music Education (2020).

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# Impact Statement

This research study sought to explore the nature of teacher's confidence with regard to facilitating musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at school. The 'Hundred Review' (2017) noted a paucity of published research evidence of current Reception Year pedagogy and practice. Similarly, studies exploring music learning and development in this last year of the Foundation Stage (EYFS2) remain scarce. Therefore, the rationale for this research was to contribute to these bodies of knowledge in order to recognise, recommend and respond to the imperative that all young children should have equal access of opportunity and experience to develop their innate musicality.

To this end, the themes of teacher musical identity, confidence and beliefs of self-efficacy, as well as current early childhood pedagogical practices were explored. The contribution to knowledge of the research findings is to (a) confirm that many Reception class teachers are not sufficiently confident to engage in musical activities with their pupils because of a generally poor sense of self-efficacy with regard to music pedagogy, and (b) the statutory curricula and guidelines create difficulties in making explicit what music education should be for young children and children entering Primary school. This is compounded by the Reception Year (the first year of Primary School) having its curricula shaped by both the Early Learning Goals and also the National Curriculum.

Potential impacts emerging from the findings of this study are pertinent across the strata of interested and involved stakeholders, ranging from national policy to schools and 'in the home':

1. Provision for all young children (zero to five) such that they are able to access and engage in music making experiences should be incorporated formally and officially into the revised National Plan for Music Education (proposed for 2020). This both creates a public statement of value, whilst acknowledging the musical competence and agency of the very young infant.
2. Music should consistently be an integral part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014; 2018) and not be a casualty of curricula constraints resulting from the pressures of performance and accountability, nor hidden under a vague umbrella term such as creativity, or the arts. Whilst acknowledging the functional and

therapeutic purposes and benefits of music, the intrinsic value of music – as an essential part of what makes us human – should be recognised and included for its inherent worth.

3. Music Education Hubs should be empowered to consider a coherent and coordinated early childhood (zero to five) music programme. More importantly, (a) this should be informed by best practice research; (b) music practitioners need to be skilled and have the required knowledge and understanding of both child development and early childhood music pedagogical practices; and (c) understanding the nature of music should be broadened to acknowledge individual needs and local contexts, respond to cultural diversity, as well as recognise the plurality of musical engagement possibilities, incorporating a range of genres and technologies.
4. A more coordinated, coherent and effective approach is required with regard to workforce development for all those involved in the education and care of zero to five-year-olds, including such groups as childminders, preschools, nurseries and Reception class teachers. Recognising that traditional continuing professional development 'top down, one size fits all' methods and approaches may not be reliable, it is also necessary to turn to examples of good practice evidenced in research to encourage ownership and empowerment of practitioners at ground level. Furthermore, exploring alternative strategies are recommended, such as collaborative, communities of practice and networks supported by mentors knowledgeable in both music and child development.
5. Positive perceptions of music self-identity and self-efficacy need to be encouraged and supported throughout a teacher's continuous professional development, beginning with initial teacher education. Strategies to accomplish this goal involve: (a) creating environments with a musical ethos, where it becomes the accepted norm to sing and engage in a variety of embodied musical practices; and (b) encouraging changes in the perception of what music is, as well as what it means to be musical, taking it beyond the elitist connotations of a Western European conception of the 'high art' classical performance tradition.

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## List of Abbreviations

AP	Absolute pitch
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CoEL	Characteristics of Effective Learning
CPD	Continuing professional development
CSA	Compulsory school age
DCELLS	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Diffusion tensor imaging
EAD	Expressive Arts and Design
EEG	Electroencephalogram
EOG	Electrooculogram
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-school Education
ERP	Event related brain potentials
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYFS2	Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class)
fMRI	Functional magnetic resonance imaging
G&T	Gifted and talented
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
K	Kindergarten
IDS	Infant directed singing
IDS	Infant directed speech
IT	Information technology
ITE	Initial teacher education
KS1	Key Stage 1
MEG	Magnetoencephalography
MMN	Mismatch negativity

MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
NBS	Navigated transcranial magnetic brain stimulation
NMPE	National Plan for Music Education
RP	Relative pitch
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PPA	Planning, preparation, assessment
PSED	Personal, social and emotional development
PT	Possibility thinking
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
REPEY	Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years
SCAA	School Curriculum and Standards Authority
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
TMS	Transcranial magnetic brain stimulation
UoW	Understanding of the world
WCET	Whole class ensemble teaching



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Stunell (2010) suggests that there is a correlation between a teacher's deficit in confidence concerning music education, with a perceived lack of competence and agency. Other researchers report similar findings (Mills, 1989; Gifford, 1993; Jeanneret, 1997; Hennessy, 2000, 2012; Holden & Button, 2006; McCullough, 2006 ; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Hallam et al., 2009; de Vries, 2011, 2013; Biasutti, Hennessy & de Vugt-Jansen, 2015; Baldwin & Beauchamp, 2014; Henley, 2017; Partington, 2017; Garrett, 2019; Kulset & Halle, 2019). The present study seeks to explore the nature of teacher confidence with regard to facilitating musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at Primary school.

## 1.2 Personal rationale and background to the study

I spent the early part of my career teaching music in secondary schools. As is often the case, the transition into the world of early childhood music coincided with the birth of my first child. Little did I know where this change in course would lead twenty years on. A 'lightbulb' moment, one of two catalysts for embarking on this research journey, was observing the impact of musical play on the holistic development of children in the early years, especially, their musical learning. I was regularly overwhelmed and astounded by the power of a broad and varied music making experience on the whole, rounded development of children of this young age, particularly after the often seemingly 'remedial' work I had been delivering to, sometimes, disenchanted eleven-year-olds.

During those interim years of music making with children aged 0-5 years, mostly with parents/carers or in pre-school, nurseries and school reception classes, my attention was increasingly drawn to the pedagogical dichotomies located within teaching music in this early childhood phase of education. Issues such as infant musical competence; sequential musical development taxonomies; informal play-centred practice; as well as adult-led versus child-initiated models of learning piqued my interest (the second catalyst). Furthermore, I pondered, that if I felt challenged by these distinctive theories and practices, following more than a decade of developing musical professional

experience and knowledge of this early childhood phase, how do generalist Reception teachers fare within school with the opposite background? Intrigued, I undertook this higher level of study in a quest to further my understanding of both the musical experiences of children in the Reception class, as well as to explore the pertinent issues for the Reception teacher with regard to this area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### 1.3 Research aims

Thus, the fundamental rationale for this enquiry was to contribute to the bodies of knowledge that recognise, recommend and respond to the imperative that all young children should have equal access of opportunity and experience to develop their innate musicality (see Chapter 2). To this end, the themes of teacher musical identity, confidence and beliefs of self-efficacy, as well as current early childhood pedagogical practices were explored. The aim was to try to reconcile the possible disconnect between children`s musical competence and agency with the potential lack of confidence, knowledge and understanding on the part of the teacher. The themes of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) were also researched, with a view to discovering evidence-based strategies and initiatives to support Reception teachers, helping them to gain confidence, to believe in their musical self-efficacy, which in turn would translate into musical agency in the classroom.

The paucity of published research regarding the phenomenon of music learning and development in the first year of formal school education in schools in England, simultaneously, the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS2), demonstrated that this area warrants further study. As noted in the 'Hundred Review' (2017), "Rigorous research evidence on the actuality of current Reception Year practice and pedagogy is rather thin" (Pascal, Bertram & Cole- Albäck, 2017, p. 10). Similarly, research evidence on music learning and development in the Reception Year is scarce.

## 1.4 Contextual considerations

A series of dilemmas, pertaining to the particular focus of the Reception Year (EYFS2) of the English school system, were encountered along the course of this research journey. Referenced below, these include a description of national, as well as the search for parallel international contexts. Also, a brief overview of the potential range of philosophical perspectives follows. This serves to illustrate both the breadth and depth of critical engagement, as well as the diversity of mostly disparate theoretical approaches contributing to this study.

### 1.4.1 National and international contexts

The Reception Year of schooling straddles two different and distinctive educative strata in the English state education system. It is the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (sometimes referred to as EYFS2), and yet it is also the first year of formal primary schooling. The EYFS is concerned with the education and care of very young children and it has its own distinct child centred play-based pedagogy, in contrast to the more traditional, didactic National Curriculum focused form of schooling from Year one onwards.

Comparisons with early childhood education and care systems in both Great Britain, as well as further afield, demonstrate the complexities of this subject, not least the differing starting compulsory school ages. For instance, children begin their formal education aged 4 years in Northern Ireland; 4 to 5 years in England and Australia; 4.5 to 5.5 in Scotland; 5 years in Wales; 5 to 6 in USA and Canada; 6 years in Denmark, Norway, Spain, Germany, Italy and New Zealand. Whilst, in Sweden and Finland, children begin their compulsory schooling at 6 or 7 years of age.

Furthermore, comparing and contrasting the relevant curriculum and early childhood guidance frameworks was compounded by their positioning in the education continuum. For instance, the education and care remit for children aged 4 and 5 years is included in the early childhood phase (e.g., England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Eire, Australia), whilst others may be found within the statutory school system (e.g., Scotland), or possibly both. For example, four-year-old children would be included in the `Te Whāriki` early childhood framework in New Zealand (New Zealand, Ministry of Education, 2017). However, the school curriculum begins in Year One for children aged five-years. Comparisons with curricular frameworks across the Atlantic in the USA and

Canada become even more complex. For each state or region has individual legislative responsibility for education.

#### 1.4.2 Philosophical perspectives and theoretical approaches

Another influential contextual factor concerns the philosophical perspectives and theoretical approaches pertaining to the bodies of literature pertinent to this study. The search for research evidence on the range of themes represented in the literature reviews could be described as being drawn from individual, distinctive and discreet research disciplines. These comprise: (1) developmental music psychology with one strand emphasising positivistic behavioural measures, tracking the progressive, sequential ages, stages or phases of developing music abilities (e.g., Gruhn, 2002; Moog, 1976; Swanwick & Tillman, 1986; Gordon, 1990; Welch, 2006).

(2) Anthropological studies of early childhood offer combined biological and cultural perspectives that focus on how children participate and engage in music (Rogoff, 2003; Young, 2018). Observational methods are closely identified with this approach, recorded in the form of detailed notes in the field (Young, 2018; Powell & Smith, 2018). The related discipline of ethnomusicology “refers to the different musical systems of the world” (Blacking 1995, p.3). Ethnographic early childhood music studies often take the form of naturalistic observations of musical engagement located within situational social, environmental and cultural contexts (e.g., Vojajoklu & Ockelford, 2016; Sundin, 1997; Pond, 2014; Campbell, 1998; Parker, 2013; Bresler, 1993; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Bond, 2015; Partington, 2017; Young, 2002; Custodero, 2006; Custodero et al., 2016; Tafuri, 2008; Koops, 2014; Barrett, 2006). (3) “Sociology is concerned with the study and understanding of social processes and social structures” (Powell & Smith, 2018, p. 32). Sociocultural interpretive approaches to early childhood education incorporate such concepts as viewing the ‘child as co-constructor’, congruent with international curricula such as ‘Reggio Emilia’ (Gandini, 1993; Malaguzzi, 1994; Hanna 2014; Bond, 2015; You, et al., 2015) and ‘Te Whāriki’ (New Zealand, Ministry of Education, 2017). Batt-Rawden and DeNora (2005) also note that music sociology focuses on “informal learning as it is situated in and derived from everyday life experience” (p. 289). Young (2018), adding to this observation, recognises significant research interest in children’s music making ...

... that happens in all the spaces and places where children live their lives: ... at home, in outdoor spaces ... in the so-called third spaces (journeys, shopping, restaurants, waiting rooms (Young, 2018, p. 91).

(4) Childhood studies, also referenced as the sociology of childhood or the new social studies of childhood, emerged during the late 1980s and 1990s in Scandinavia and England (Prout, 2011; Young, 2018). Encouraging a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on theories from the disciplines of psychology, anthropology and sociology amongst others (Prout, 2011; Tisdall & Punch, 2012), childhood studies fundamentally changed the perception of understanding children and childhood (Young, 2018). Grounded in the children's rights agenda, advocating that children are unique, competent individuals, childhood studies propounded the view of children as socially active agents in their own right (Corsaro, 2005; Prout, 2011; Tisdall & Punch, 2012; Powell & Smith, 2018). The four philosophical perspectives outlined here serve to illustrate the complexities of historical, as well as contemporary approaches to research and understandings of young children's musical worlds. Their inclusion in this introductory chapter serves to lay the broader contextual foundations for this research study.

## 1.5 Developing a theoretical approach and framework

A considerable number of international research studies evidence the musical competencies of very young children (e.g., DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; Huotilainen et al., 2005; Trehub & Hannon, 2006; Hefer et al., 2009; Plantinga & Trainor, 2005, 2009; Stefano et al., 2017). A similar body of literature reports on teachers' lack of confidence and competence, as well as self-efficacy beliefs with regard to teaching music in the early years (e.g. Mills, 1989; Gifford, 1993a; Jeanneret, 1997; Hennessy, 2000; Hallam et al., 2009; Hash, 2010; Holden & Button, 2006; Hargreaves & Welch, 2003; Welch et al., 2010; Ballantyne, 2005; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011; de Vries, 2011; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Biasutti, Hennessy & de Vugt-Jansen, 2015; Henley, 2017). The likelihood of a possible disjunct between these potentially polarised positions provided the impetus to investigate and explore these concerns. By understanding the issues, the aim was to identify the most appropriate means of supporting the teachers to bridge this disconnect, with a view to working towards a sustained amelioration of the musical engagement experience of both parties.

To this end, a series of the relevant bodies of literature from both ends (children and adults, including teachers, teaching assistants, parents and other carers) of the

learning partnership continuum were reviewed. This task served the dual intent of both situating the research questions within their broader fields of enquiry, as well as exploring a range of literature in order to build a theoretical position with which to interrogate the data emerging from the fieldwork. The premise for this process was grounded in the view that the notions of iterative, dialogical interaction, research imagination, as well as critical engagement on the part of the researcher can advance academic scholarship (MacLure, 2005). Further to an exposition of the philosophical origins and evolution of hermeneutic theory, a theoretical framework, emerging from the literature review and framed by the concept of hermeneutic circles (Heidegger, 1962; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014), was proposed to address the dilemma of potential disconnect.

## 1.6 Thesis structure and outline

This research study commences with a series of literature reviews, comprising five broad and diverse areas. Three of these explore the literature from the standpoint of the child (Chapters 2, 3 and 4), whilst Chapters 5 and 6 centre on the teacher. Chapter 7 describes the emergent theoretical framework, grounded in hermeneutic philosophy and visually presented as a model based on the concept of hermeneutic circles. Musical development in infancy provides the focus for the first literature review (Chapter 2), delving into a range of research studies which discuss both foetal and neonatal auditory development, as well as infant abilities to discriminate musical elements. Chapter 3 reviews the reported functions of music in early childhood and the contribution that playful musical interactions can make to the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of the young child. Chapter 4 explores children`s spontaneous musical behaviours, as well as reflecting on the impact of digital technologies and screen media. Turning to a practitioner focus, the trajectory of early childhood education is reviewed in Chapter 5. Pedagogical features of this particular phase of schooling are explored, compared and contrasted with statutory expectations and international curricula. Chapter 6 reviews the impact of both initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes on teacher`s beliefs of self-efficacy and confidence with regard to facilitating the musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at school. The final Chapter (7) seeks to draw the threads together from the various fields of enquiry,

following the hermeneutical philosophical principles to create the circular theoretical framework (Schleiermacher, 1998; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). The aim was to build a theoretical position, based on current literature sources, that can interrogate the data emerging from the fieldwork.

Chapter 8, research methodology, presents the epistemological and ontological perspectives underpinning the study. The focus of this research inquiry, as well as the generative research questions, reflected both an exploratory nature, commonly associated with the qualitative methodology, and an investigative nature, associated with the quantitative methodology, therefore a mixed methods approach was adopted. By combining the two epistemological positions (positivist and interpretivist), the aim was to create a more coherent and complete research design, focusing on both a breadth and depth of understanding. The explanatory sequential research design created a progressive focus from the contextual frame, set by the quantitative online questionnaire, toward the more in-depth and rich detail proffered by the qualitative semi-structured interviews. The aim of this process was to gain greater insight into the complexities of the research phenomenon.

A discussion of ethical procedures adopted, as well as issues of bias, reliability and validity complete Chapter 8. The following Chapters, 9 and 10, report the data analyses of the questionnaires and interviews in turn. Chapter 11 draws together the combined quantitative and qualitative findings, in triangulation with the literature reviews, to be discussed in the context of the theoretical framework. The final Chapter (12) brings the research study to a conclusion by summing the findings, proposing implications for policy and practice, as well as offering suggestions for future research.

## 1.7 The research questions

The theoretical framework for this research study, derived from hermeneutic philosophical principles that portray understanding as an iterative, dialectical interaction, represented by the concept of circles ensured a solid foundation for the literature reviews. This, in turn, provided a strong base of understanding from which to draw out the research questions to carry forward for data collection and analyses. To reiterate the purpose of this thesis was to explore teacher confidence with regard to

facilitating children's musical learning and development in the Reception Year at Primary school. The research questions comprised:

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

In sum, in anticipation of the first review, the underlying premise of this thesis considers the view that we are innately musical and that all young children have an entitlement to a broad and rich music education. Indeed, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international treaty ratified by The United Nations in 1989, sets out universally accepted rights for children. Article 31 states:

That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (OCHR, 1989, p. 9).

Furthermore, the statutory guidance for local authorities, `Early education and childcare` policy document states: "Evidence shows that regular good quality early education has lasting benefits for all children" (DfE, 2013, p. 6). It will be argued that this principle should also be applied to early years music education.



## Chapter 2: Musical development in infancy

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the first of the literature reviews, with a focus on infant musical competence, delving into a range of research studies which discuss both foetal and neonatal auditory development, as well as infant abilities to discriminate musical elements.

A summary overview, drawn from an extensive body of research literature, is presented here as support for the argument that children are innately musical. For, as Pound and Harrison (2003) suggest, there is:

... good evidence to support the view that we are born musical. Even before we are born, music has an impact on our lives and stimulated our development (Pound & Harrison, 2003, p. 19).

Thus, the first literature review begins with a search for evidence of the musical potential of the newborn infant.

### 2.2 Foetal auditory development

The intrauterine environment within which a human foetus develops is not silent (DeCasper & Spence, 1986). Sounds emanate from three main sources: (1) from the mother, including her voice, heartbeat, breathing and digestive system; (2) biological sounds, such as those deriving from the respiratory, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular origins of the foetus itself; and (3) external environmental sounds, including speech and music (Parncutt, 2006; Lecanuet & Schaal, 2002). Parncutt reports this range of sounds, both internal and external, to be 'muffled' in presentation. This loss of clarity is due to the soundwaves traversing through the amniotic fluid, as well as the dermal layers of the mother's body.

Foetal awareness of this soundscape has been evidenced by noting startled responses, as well as changes in reflexive movement and heart rate (Bjorkvold, 1992; Parncutt, 2006; Tafuri, 2008; Bannan & Woodward, 2008). Tafuri describes this phenomenon:

The foetus reacts to sounds in the interior environment (intrauterine sounds from the mother's heartbeat to the ripples made by their own movement) and from the exterior

environment (voices, sounds, music) with variations in heartbeat (acceleration/deceleration) and with movements, varying from brusque to gentle of the eyelids, the head, the limbs, the trunk (Tafari, 2008, p. 9).

Thus, sound perception is a primary musical competence exhibited by the prenatal infant. Motor responses reacting to sound stimulation have been observed between 24 and 30 weeks in utero, whilst changes in heart rate in response to sound have been noted between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> week of gestation (Lecanuet, 1996). The middle ear develops from the eighth week until the eighth gestational month (Lecanuet, 1996), whilst the cochlea of the inner ear begins developing from around the 28<sup>th</sup> day, is functioning by the 20<sup>th</sup> week, reaching full maturation the 8<sup>th</sup> month of gestation (Lecanuet, 1996; Woodward & Guidozzi, 1992; Lecanuet & Schaal, 2002). The cochlea is where “vibrations are converted to neural impulses, and different frequencies are separated” (Parncutt, 2006, p. 3). Thus, the normal developing foetus has the capacity to hear both internal and external sounds during the third trimester of pregnancy (Lecanuet, 1996; Lecanuet & Schaal, 2002; Parncutt, 2006; Ilari, 2002; Adachi & Trehub, 2012; Tafari, 2008; Litovsky, 2015), with a particular sensitivity to the mother’s voice and heartbeat (Webb et al., 2015).

Auditory development involves changes in the peripheral and central nervous system along the auditory pathways, and these occur naturally, and in response to stimulation (Litovsky, 2015, p. 55)

A number of studies explore the phenomenon of pre-birth auditory sensitivity and development. Foetal response to recorded music is evidenced by measuring heart rate responses (and movement), using a cardiotocograph monitor (CTG) (Woodward & Guidozzi, 1992; Wilkin, 1995). Partanen et al., (2013) employed EEG (electroencephalogram) and EOG (electrooculogram) procedures to measure and record the positive responses of brain event-related potentials (ERPs). These authors evidenced long term auditory memory, implying that perceptual and cognitive faculties develop in utero, as illustrated by their finding that young babies can recall a melody several months after the original presentation.

Commonly referred to as the ‘familiarization’, ‘novelty’ or ‘oddball stimulus’ research paradigm, the MMN procedure (mismatch negativity) is often used in early childhood research (Huotilainen et al., 2005; Draganova et al., 2005; Kisilevsky et al., 2009). The procedure consists of recording the reaction of a foetus (or neonate) to the presentation of a sequence of sounds, interspersed with an ‘oddball’, novel or deviant

sound. This phenomenon is referenced as “mismatch negativity (MMN) because it appears as a negative deflection in electroencephalographic (EEG) recordings” (Draganova et al., 2005, p. 355). Combining the `oddball stimulus` paradigm with the non-invasive technique of Magnetoencephalography (MEG), which records and measures the magnetic fields produced by the brain, has evidenced the sound discrimination responses and memory capacities of foetal brain activity (*cf* Huotilainen et al., 2005; Draganova et al., 2005). Kreuger et al., (2004) monitored and documented foetal cardiac responses to the maternal recitation aloud of a nursery rhyme in a resting prenatal baby using an abdominal ultrasound monitor. The authors found significant cardiac response from 33 weeks’ gestation, adding weight to the notion of foetal auditory development. Limitations of the above studies comprise the small sample sizes and lack of control groups and insufficient accounting for alternate variables (e.g. movement).

Kisilevsky et al., (2009) also measured foetal cardiac responses, employing the `oddball` paradigm to further advance the notions of foetal voice recognition and language memory. A series of experiments explored the potential for language discrimination by reciting poems or stories in the English native language and a novel foreign language, such as Mandarin. Findings demonstrated a foetal response to the novel language, indicating the ability to recall and discriminate changes in language. These authors suggest that the potential for speech and language begins before birth, since the “neural networks sensitive to properties of the mother’s voice and native-language speech are being formed in the womb” (Kisilevsky et al., 2009, p. 59).

Webb et al., (2015) provide further evidence to support the idea that the foetal brain responds to the auditory stimuli presented by the sounds of the mother’s voice and heartbeat in the womb. Forty preterm newborn infants, born between 25-and-32-weeks gestation, received either aural enrichment in the form of audio recordings of the mother’s voice and heartbeat, or were exposed to the daily environmental sounds of the hospital. Cranial ultrasonography measurements recorded a significantly larger auditory cortex in the cases of the premature infants in receipt of further maternal auditory enrichment. Webb et al., (2015) drew the conclusion that maternal “voice and heartbeat sounds elicit auditory plasticity in the human brain before full gestation” (p. 3152). Litovsky (2015) describes this process:

The ability of the auditory system to adapt in response to novel stimuli is a key feature of development throughout the nervous system, known as neural plasticity (Litovksy, 2015, p. 55).

## 2.3 Neo natal auditory discrimination

These foetal auditory discrimination studies have pursued notions of maternal voice preference, indicating prenatal aural capacities. These themes were also observed and recorded in earlier studies, with the emergent hypotheses tested on newborn infants. Researchers have employed a range of protocols with neonates that include 'non-nutritive sucking', and head-turning or looking time 'operant choice' procedures (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; DeCasper & Spence, 1986). Alternative protocols have included measuring tempi changes in heart rate using a 'Doppler cardiocograph' (DeCasper et al., 1994) or recording heartbeat sounds and/or respiratory movement (Ockleford et al, 1988).

These earlier studies report that the neonate can recall, and exhibit learned preferences for (1) the mother's speaking and/or singing voice (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; Ockleford, Layton & Reader, 1988; Cooper & Aslin 1989; DeCasper et al., 1994; Lecanuet, 1996); and (2) spoken prose/story and/or song (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; DeCasper & Spence, 1986; DeCasper et al., 1994). These authors suggest that the foetus acquires the capacity to hear and listen during the final term of gestation and that this is evidenced by their ability to discern their mother's voice and indeed discriminate familiar speech patterns at birth.

Adding a new dimension to the research on musical cognitive activity in the newborn infant, an Israeli study (Hefer et al., 2009) used video observation and an Electroencephalogram (EEG) to measure the brain's electrical activity. The authors compared the difference between responses to (a) silence, (b) random, disorganized sound, and (c) tonal, structured music in 25 full-term infants, aged two to seven days. The researchers noted that the infants were most active, with their eyes open, whilst listening to the Mozart excerpts. The neonates responded kinaesthetically to the music, incorporating cyclical movement gestures such as curling and straightening of fingers, synchronising eye and head movements, as well as adding multidirectional (raising or lowering; moving forwards/backwards) hand and/or arm movements. Furthermore, the

cyclical hand gestures aligned with the phrasing of an excerpt from a Mozart piano concerto. The authors reported that:

Correspondence between certain musical events (crescendo, rise to the highest register) and movement responses surpassed our expectation in terms of apparent responsiveness to cycles of tension release generated by the music (Hefer et al., 2009, p. 769).

The relevance of this research study to the current thesis resides in two particular observations by the authors. The first, suggests that “kinaesthetic behaviour as the root of mental schemas” (Hefer et al., 2009, p. 779). These findings indicate that “movement as a source of musical organisation is already present within days after birth” (p. 780), thus emphasising the relevance of a kinaesthetic modality in early music teaching and learning. The second observation refers to the implication of the presence of musical cognitive activity at birth, due to the research results demonstrating that newborn infants exhibit different responses to random and organised sound stimuli.

Therefore:

Evidence of musical cognitive process at birth should encourage early childhood teachers to develop this inborn capacity to its fullest (p. 781) ... [since] ... Our analyses point to clear differences in response to random sounds vs. to music, thereby supporting the hypothesis that musical cognitive activity is already present at birth (Hefer et al., 2009, p. 769).

There are several possible limitations in the reporting of this study. These relate to (1) the protocol adopted to analyse the data of the video evidence of the responses of the three infants; (2) the level of questions related to the representativeness and thus (3) the generalisability of the nested sample of three, from the total sample of 22 infants. Nevertheless, the study accords with other studies on early music perception and cognition.

In sum, the findings from these studies collectively support a view of the musical potential of young infants in the respect of musical processing, perception and cognition. As Plantinga and Trainor (2009) contend: “The presence of these skills early in development suggests that humans begin life with a predisposition to process music” (p. 58).

## 2.4 Infant discrimination of musical elements

The foetal and neonatal studies discussed thus far indicate that the prenatal infant begins to develop auditory discriminatory skills in the womb. There is a substantial body of research literature that pursues this line of enquiry regarding the musical perceptions of very young children. Indeed, studies contend that young infants can discern, as well as exhibit preferences, for particular musical elements, including (1) *pulse* (Trainor et al., 1997; Trehub & Hannon, 2006; Winkler et al., 2009); (2) *duration* (Trehub, 2003; Trehub & Hannon, 2006; Hannon et al., 2005); and (3) *pitch and melodic contour* (Chang & Trehub, 1977; Trehub, Bull & Thorpe, 1984; Trehub, Thorpe & Morrongiello, 1985, 1987; Lecanuet & Schaal, 2002; Trehub, 2003; Carral et al., 2005; Plantinga & Trainor, 2005, 2009).

The behavioural protocols adopted in these studies to assess infant musical perception and auditory cognition comprise (1) the 'conditioned head turn' or 'visual habituation' (Trehub et al., 1984); (2) the 'head turn preference' or 'preferential looking time' (Fernald, 1985; Hannon, Trehub & Purves, 2005); and (3) the 'eye movement procedure' for the youngest infants (Plantinga & Trainor, 2009). The 'conditioned head turn' is the primary method employed by researchers such as Trehub, Bull and Thorpe (1984). This procedure aims to condition an infant to make a head turn in response to a change in a previously presented aural pattern. The option to present multiple test trials on individual infants is considered to be the main advantage of such an approach, whilst the disadvantages of this procedure include the limited duration of trial presentation, as well as perception difficulties experienced interpreting the discrimination results (Ilari, 2002). The second protocol, the 'head turn preference' has been mostly selected for enquiries relating to choice, e.g., (Fernald, 1985). However, some difficulty in interpreting the data is similarly considered to be a limiting factor. For, as with the 'conditioned head turn procedure,' "it is hard to tell "what" the infant has perceived" (Ilari, 2002, p. 318).

Additional response measures are often included in behavioural research designs. These may comprise high amplitude sucking (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980); cardiac acceleration/deceleration (Chang & Trehub, 1977) or measures of salivary cortisol and/or body movement (Nakata & Trehub, 2004; Trainor, 1996). One recent study by Stefano et al., (2017) pursued the embodiment theme, exploring the interface between

musical perception and action, by devising a musical toy that young children can manipulate to produce consonant and dissonant sound stimuli.

New technologies developed over the last twenty years have brought forth laboratory use of non-invasive and precise neuroscientific instruments to measure electrical brain responses. For instance, auditory event related brain potentials (ERP) are measured by means of the multi-channel Electroencephalogram (EEG); a neuroimaging technique for mapping brain activity is offered by Magnetoencephalography (MEG); structural and Functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI, fMRI) measure brain activity by detecting changes associated with blood flow; and Navigated transcranial magnetic brain stimulation (NBS and TMS) provides an imaging tool to map speech and motor regions of the cortex (Huotilainen et al., 2005; Fang et al., 2019). In the course of their study of the impact of musical sensorimotor skills on human brain plasticity, Wan and Schlaug (2010) also describe neuroimaging advances such as “the use of diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) to examine white matter anatomy of the human brain” (p. 569).

#### 2.4.1 Pulse, meter and rhythm

Further to the notion of early childhood discrimination and perception of the elements of music, Ilari (2002) provides a definition for the term metre, that is “the placement of accents within a musical measure that helps determine the character of a piece of music” (p. 315). The synchronisation of rhythmical movement to the musical pulse is reported to be ubiquitous across cultures and historical periods, often beginning with metrically congruent rocking, bouncing or swaying with a babe in arms (Moog, 1976; Eerola et al., 2006; Tafuri, 2008; Young, n.d.; Wu, 2017). A perception of meter is also required in order to be able to coordinate body percussive sounds, such as clapping, patsch (patting parts of the body) and so on, as well as to synchronise dance, singing and instrumental play.

In respect of responses to the musical element of pulse, Winkler et al., (2009) demonstrate that it is possible to measure the “electrical brain responses to sounds (auditory event related brain potentials, ERP), even in sleeping babies” (p. 2468). In pursuit of the principle that humans instinctively identify and gravitate kinaesthetically to an underlying pulse when listening to music, the authors’ experiment involved disrupting the downbeat cycle of a rhythmic sequence. Indeed, they suggest that “the

newborn auditory system is apparently sensitive to periodicities and develops expectations about when a new cycle should start (i.e., when the downbeat should occur)" (Winkler et al., 2009, p. 2470).

The research study above, exploring neurological change, supports the notion that a musical pulse is salient to the neonatal infant. Given the understanding of the temporal nature of music, in that it unfolds over time, Trehub and Thorpe (1989) explored 80 infants' perception of rhythmic patterns presented with varied tempi and frequency changes. Employing a head turn protocol, whereby positive responses were reinforced by "the illumination and activation of a mechanical toy" (p. 222), the infants were reported to be able to discriminate between contrasting rhythmic patterns with the concomitant variations. Trehub and Hannon (2006) developed this theme further, proposing that infants are born with the ability to perceive three kinds of temporal organisational structures. These comprise, *meter* – "an underlying pattern of strong and weak isochronous beats" (p. 85); *rhythm* - "patterns typically contain multiple temporal intervals of different durations" (p. 83) and *grouping* - "the perception of boundaries between groups and subgroups of elements in an unfolding musical sequence" (p. 82). Furthermore, by employing a 'looking time habituation novelty' paradigm, Hannon and Johnson (2005) investigated whether infants as young as seven months, were able to infer metre from rhythmic patterns. These authors evidenced infants' ability to discriminate meters of contrasting extracts with an underlying temporal metre of either triple or duple time.

In an earlier study, using the reinforced head turn protocol, Thorpe et al., (1988) investigated the auditory perception of young infants to discriminate temporal changes between groups of tones compared with the changes within a group. These authors found that infants aged six to nine months were able to discriminate between rhythmic patterns. In sum, there are several research studies providing evidence in support of children's innate sense of pulse and rhythm.

Further to their cultural non/isochronous metre experiments with six-and-twelve-month-old infants. Hannon, Trehub and Purves (2005) posited that "there may be a sensitive period early in life for acquiring rhythm" (p. 12639). Bailey and Penhune (2012) also explored the notion of a sensitive period, in other words "a window during maturation when our brains are most influenced by behaviour" (p. 163). More specifically, Bailey



and Penhune were interested in investigating the “nature of the association between music lessons and cognitive abilities” (p. 164). Fifty adults, comprising 30 highly trained, practising musicians and a group of 20 highly educated non musicians, completed a musical experience questionnaire, practical rhythmic trials and intelligence tests. The musicians were classified as early or later trained (before/after the age of seven). The earlier trained musicians were more successful in completing the rhythmical task than their counterparts. Thus, the authors concluded that their findings provided further support for the notion of “a sensitive period for sensorimotor-integration abilities among musicians” (p.170). Limitations of this study might reference both the broad definition of the earlier trained age band, as well as the narrow range of musicianship skills tested.

Trainor (2005) also discussed the notion of a sensitive period, or critical developmental window for early musical experience and training, in the context of reaching future high levels of expertise. Trainor drew the conclusion that it is a complex, uncharted area of research and that “there are multiple pathways to achieving musical expertise” (p. 274). This notion of a `sensitive period` or `window of opportunity` will return below in the context of the thread discussing the subject of so-called `neuromyths` (Section 4.5).

#### 2.4.2 Infant perception of pitch, melodic contour, consonance and harmony

A similar argument for infant musical competence is presented for the early perception and discrimination of the musical element of pitch. Lecanuet (1996) contends that infants perceive pitch while still in the womb. This notion was evidenced by observing motor responses, as well as accelerative changes in heart rate, in the presence of air-coupled stimulation of pure tones in prenatal infants from about the gestational age of 27 weeks. A later study, Carral et al., (2005) used an auditory event-related brain potential (ERP) mismatch negativity (MMN) protocol to assess the ability of eleven sleeping newborn infants to detect changes in the direction of tones, in other words to determine the deviant descending pairs from those that were ascending. The larger amplitude waveforms recorded in the electroencephalogram data supported the hypothesis that sleeping newborn infants were able to discriminate between simple pitch dyads, inferring an auditory potential for pitch perception at birth.

Adopting a developmentally age appropriate eye-movement preference procedure, Plantinga and Trainor (2009) found that two-month-old infants were able to discriminate changes in melodic pitch patterns. Other explorations of the pitch auditory perception abilities of young infants have included: (1) *changes in single tones* (Trehub, Thorpe & Morrongiello, 1985); (2) *melodic transposition* (Chang & Trehub, 1977; Trehub, Thorpe & Morrongiello, 1987); (3) *global pitch contour* (Chang & Trehub, 1977; Trehub, Bull & Thorpe, 1984; Trehub, Thorpe & Morrongiello, 1987); (4) *intervals* (Schellenberg & Trehub, 1996b); (5) *consonance and dissonance* (Zentner & Kagan, 1998) and (6) *absolute and relative pitch processing* (Plantinga & Trainor, 2005).

Some studies have suggested that infants process melodies “on the basis of global properties such as contour ... as opposed to absolute pitches” (Ilari, 2002, p. 313). Employing a habituation/dishabituation paradigm, with the added response measure of cardiac deceleration, Chang and Trehub (1977) observed that, at five to six months, infants can recognise a transposed melodic pattern. Further to an experiment exploring infant discrimination of transformed melodies, Trehub, Bull and Thorpe (1984), concluded that:

Infants' perception of melodies can be said to be holistic or structured, with the global properties of contour and range perceived across transformations of specific properties, such as interval size and absolute frequency (Trehub, Bull & Thorpe, 1984, p. 829).

Trehub, Thorpe and Morrongiello (1987) also investigated infant discrimination of melodic contour changes using an operant head-turn procedure. Findings demonstrated that infants aged nine to eleven months were able to detect changes in the contour of five-tone melodies regardless of the varied conditions of key or interval size. The authors concluded that infants “categorize sequences of sounds on the basis of global, relational properties such as melodic contour” (p. 741).

Zentner and Kagan (1998) hypothesised that young infants would exhibit a preferential bias favouring a consonant rather than a dissonant melody. Consonance refers to a subjective view that a combination of simultaneous frequencies sound relatively pleasant to the ear, whilst another combination of sounds based on an alternative interval size, i.e. the difference in frequencies between two tones, might be classed as dissonant. A participant group of 32 four-month-old infants were presented with two short contrasting Central European melodies. Acknowledging potential limitations of the

study, such as interval size and restricted interpretations of the notions of consonance and dissonance, the authors concluded that the infants found consonant melodies to be more pleasing to the ear. This was due to the impact of dissonant melodic presentation, evidenced by a combination of increased motor activity, shorter fixation time, with increased fretting and turning away.

Schellenberg and Trehub (1996b) pursued the notion that infants are able to detect changes in both sequenced patterns harmonic and melodic intervals. The operant head turn procedure was employed for the contrasting change/no change trials. The results, which were subjected to analyses of statistical variance, ascertained that nine-month-old infants were successful in determining changes to the simple harmonic intervals, but not in a complex tritone. A second experiment investigated the ability of younger children to discriminate differences in sequential melodic intervals. 54 infants aged six to seven months were presented with a standard melodic pattern with transposed repetitions upward or downward by two semitones. An analysis of variance revealed significant difference across the conditions confirming the earlier finding that young infants can reliably discriminate simple melodic intervals.

There is some debate surrounding the assertion that a form of absolute or so-called perfect pitch is innate at birth. Trehub (2003) defines absolute pitch (AP) "as the ability to identify a specific tone by its musical name (e.g. C) or to produce it ... without using a reference pitch" (p. 44). In contrast, relative pitch (RP) refers to the ability to recognise and reproduce melodies according to the intervals between sounds (Trehub, 2003; Saffran, 2003). By analysing the tracking of atonal sequences of notes by both infants and adults, Saffran and Griepentrog (2001) tested a hypothesis of a pitch processing developmental shift from early AP perception to the later predominance of RP. Two groups of ten, eight-month-old infants were presented with three-note tone sequences devised from the twelve-note chromatic scale using words or part words. A head turn preference procedure was employed to ascertain infant response to determine whether they could discriminate the atonal sequence according to theorised AP or RP. The authors ascertained that since the tone words and part words were identical in respect of their relative pitch patterns, the infants used absolute pitch cues to discriminate between them, whereas the adults appeared to apply a relative pitch coding. Thus the authors concluded that there must be a developmental shift from absolute to relative pitch processing over time.

In a second study, seeking confirmation of this finding, Saffran (2003) explored the hypothesis that infants could also track absolute pitch cues for tonal sequences presented in C major. Also employing a head-turn preference protocol, two groups of eight-month-old infants were familiarized with four, three-tone word and part word sequences. Results indicated significant preference for listening to the tonal word patterns. Thus, Saffran concludes: "For this difference to emerge, infants must have represented the AP sequences heard during familiarization" (p. 37). Nevertheless, these findings have been contentious: for example, Trehub (2003) challenged the assertions made from these two studies on at least two counts: (1) adult low RP performance levels raise questions regarding the nature of the task; (2) infants should have performed equally on RP and AP tasks if they were using absolute pitch cues to discriminate. A further study by Saffran et al., (2005) investigated whether twelve, eight-month-old infants were able to track sequences of relative pitches as well as the sequences of absolute pitches, already evidenced. The structure of the task was altered to present the infants with transposed tone sequences, by removing the absolute pitch cues. Using the head-turn preference procedure, the findings demonstrated that "8-month-old infants can track relative pitch patterns given unsegmented input" (p. 6).

Plantinga and Trainor (2005) also explored the subject of absolute versus relative pitch discrimination in young infants and presented contrasting findings. The authors offered further refined definitions of the terms:

An absolute pitch code consists of the sequence of fundamental frequencies of each tone in a melody... A relative pitch code, on the other hand, does not contain information about fundamental frequencies. Rather, it consists of the sequence of pitch distances between successive melodic tones (Plantinga & Trainor, 2005, p. 2).

Investigating the notion that six-month-old infants process melodies in terms of relative, not absolute pitch, Plantinga and Trainor employed a habituation/dishabituation head turn protocol to assess infant response to familiar/unfamiliar songs. The results suggested that infants aged six months recognized the familiar melody, yet demonstrated a preference for the novel version, regardless of the mode of pitch presentation. Thus, the authors observed that infants do not recall melodies with an absolute pitch, rather they store melodic details predominantly according to a relative pitch code.

### 2.4.3 Issues of reliability and validity

It is prudent to engage in the processes of critical analysis and reflection when interpreting and reporting research findings, particularly around issues of reliability and validity. This section references a series of concerns including the limitations of experimental, cross-sectional studies, as well as the constraints and challenges encountered in laboratory environments. Ilari (2002) begins with a word of caution regarding the findings from studies of infant perceptual musical abilities. In particular, Ilari (2002) suggests that by segregating the individual musical elements such as rhythm, interval, metre and melodic contour, music has been deconstructed in order to study its component parts. The limitation arising from the potential artifice of this approach is the implicit assumption that focusing on individual musical features is a satisfactory substitute or “a synonym for the processing of music” (p. 318).

Moreover, it is likely that the overlap of musical features shifts or distorts the processing of a particular feature. ... Hence, there is no guarantee that the study of isolated features can serve as a predictor of particular behaviours in the presence of real music (Ilari, 2002, p. 318).

Furthermore, Ilari acknowledges the concomitant difficulties of infant research due to their rapid rate of growth and development, at the same time commenting on the scarcity of longitudinal studies. Ilari offers the view that it would be helpful to collect longitudinal data that tracks musical development across the prenatal and postnatal stages of infant growth, as it “would help determine which behaviours develop at specific times in the course of child development” (Ilari, 2002, p. 318). A search for more recent examples of longitudinal studies tracking this very early musical development has not been fruitful. Generic studies have been located, including the American Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (Murali, 2015<sup>1</sup>). This study followed a sample of children from birth to kindergarten, exploring such issues as child development, school readiness, and early school experiences. Studies were also found that focused on the transfer benefits of music particularly with regard to cognitive and/or emotional and social benefits. One such study compared and contrasted early shared book reading and music activities. 3031 Australian children, aged two-to-three

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301348090\\_The\\_Early\\_Childhood\\_Longitudinal\\_Study\\_Quantitative\\_Data\\_Analysis\\_in\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301348090_The_Early_Childhood_Longitudinal_Study_Quantitative_Data_Analysis_in_Education)

years, were assessed on a range of social, emotional, and cognitive measures and then tested two years later. The findings reported:

A small significant partial association with measures of children's vocabulary, numeracy, attentional and emotional regulation, and prosocial literacy and music skills (Williams et al., 2015, p. 113).

Another Australian longitudinal early childhood music research study focused on the "role of invented song-making and music engagement in 18 young children's (aged approximately 18–48 months) identity work and self-making" (Barrett, 2010, p. 403).

Search results for longitudinal early childhood musical development and engagement studies, further to Tafuri's seminal research tracing infant musical development in Italy as part of the six year 'In Canto' project in the 1990s (Tafuri, 2008), has yielded little. Two studies, similar in scope, are reported here: (1) a 15 month observational study investigating the phases and stages in early musical learning in a nursery with children aged between one-and-two years (Gruhn, 2002); (2) a two year ethnographic project, using the naturalistic observations of musical engagement in a range of environments e.g. children's centre, structured community music group, home and incidental 'out-and-about' environments and the 'Sounds of Intent Early Years' framework (Vojajoklu & Ockelford, 2016) to map the emerging musicality of 50 children from birth-to-five-years (Vojajoklu, n.d.<sup>2</sup>). Young (2018) also offers a word of caution, suggesting that developmental studies, from Moog (1976) onwards, whilst informative and valuable of their time, soon become outdated. Set in particular socio-cultural contexts, these cross-sectional studies, by their very nature, cannot keep pace with the rate of rapid developmental changes resulting from young children's engagement with "today's touchscreen digitised music worlds" (p. 68).

Wan and Schlaug (2010) add to the discussion of potential limitations of cross-sectional studies. Their research investigated such cross-modal effects as sensorimotor and cognitive benefits on the neural network of the brain, as a result of early musical training. These authors suggest that cross-sectional studies cannot account for the impact on cognitive development of such mitigating factors as

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.froebel.org.uk/research/an-exploration-of-the-influence-of-young-children-on-adults-within-natural-environments/mapping-emerging-musicality-a-longitudinal-study-of-musical-development-in-the-early-years/>

socioeconomic status, access to resources, or supportive parenting. Indeed, personal traits, such as motivation, perseverance and diligence, may also impact on the findings of these `moment-in-time` research studies. Longitudinal studies are therefore recommended as preferable, particularly in the exploratory field of skill transference. Wan and Schlaug (2010) suggest that documenting developments on an individual basis are considered to be “crucial in determining the relative contribution of `nature` and `nurture` in skill development” (p. 567).

A brief digression is required at this juncture to outline the concepts of `near` and `far` skill transference (Wan & Schlaug, 2010; Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014). The relevance of this diversion resides in the notion of the functional purposes of music. Wan and Schlaug (2010) describe the potential of multisensory experiences to facilitate plastic changes in the neural pathways to both develop and strengthen connections between the auditory, motor and sensorimotor integration areas of the brain. These authors suggest that the skills developed through musical experience and training, for instance, can contribute and benefit other domains. `Near transfer` references those skills where “there is a close resemblance between training and transfer domains” and `far transfer` is used to describe the relationship when the “resemblance between training and transfer domains is less obvious” (p. 570).

Addressing another potential limitation, specific to experimental studies, Peterson (2011) notes the challenges presented to psychologists researching the behavioural development of young infants and toddlers in highly controlled laboratory environments. Consideration was given to such associated constraints as the difficulties in creating standardised testing procedures; adhering to rigorous methodological protocols as well as managing unpredictable participants who may not perform on demand, nor conform to experimental procedures. In an ethnographic study of three child research laboratories over a period of 16 months, Peterson reported “a bend-but-don’t-break philosophy of protocol adherence” (p. 4), such as pausing experiments whilst the parent could attend to the child’s pressing physical needs. Further concerns regarding the validity of behavioural experiments comprise issues such as inter-rater coding, as well as drawing conclusions and running statistical tests from the outset. This practice deviates from the norms of rigorous disciplinary standards for the purpose of evaluating potential experimental success or failure early on, so that the necessary intermediary adjustments can be made. In order to preserve

limited resources such as time and financial expenditure, Peterson notes that a parallel study might be instigated, or an experiment simplified by altering the research questions in order to ensure a greater success potential.

## 2.5 Summary

The musical potential of the newborn infant provided the review focus for Chapter 2. The literature suggests, first, that sound perception is a primary musical competence exhibited by the prenatal infant. Second, the evidence supporting long term auditory memory implies that perceptual and cognitive faculties develop in utero. Furthermore, researchers propose that the potential for speech and language begins before birth, and that music makes a significant contribution to this developmental process. This theme is explored further in Chapter 3.

Neo natal research studies reflect on the associative kinaesthetic responses to musical stimuli. Similarly, a substantial body of research literature pursues the notion that young infants can discriminate the musical elements such as pulse, metre, duration, pitch, melodic contour, consonance and harmony. In contrast, there is some debate as to whether young infants process, store and recall melodies using absolute or relative pitch codes.

To sum, there appears to be compelling research evidence to demonstrate early development of auditory, perceptual and cognitive abilities. These findings support the claim that young children are innately musical and that this is universal, in other words that the essence of musicality is not the preserve of the gifted few.



## Chapter 3: Early childhood social, emotional and communicative musical practices

### 3.1 Introduction

This third chapter explores the contribution that playful musical interactions can make to the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of the young child, referencing the interactive, social and communicative musical practices that begin in early childhood (Cross, 2014). The notions of dyadic attunement, non-verbal social interactions, communication and language development, infant agency, as well as 'communicative musicality' are introduced, whilst exploring the topics of infant directed speech and infant directed singing.

### 3.2 Reciprocal, attuned vocal interactions

Stern (1985) describes 'affect attunement' as the transactive, nonlingual state shared between caregiver and infant. These intersubjective exchanges, characterised by their subjective and empathic responsiveness, incorporate commonly known musical devices such as imitation, theme and variation, call and response, elaboration (Stern, 1985). These attuned, universal and intuitive parent/infant vocal interactions, sometimes referenced as 'proto-conversations' (Trevarthen, 2002; 2017; Malloch, 1999), are often accompanied by facial expressions, gesture and movement (Stern, 1985; Papoušek, 1996; Trevarthen, 2002, 2008; Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002). Dissanayake (2008), for example, notes the multi-modal nature of these "audioacoustic, kinesic, visual and tactile" interactions which are perceived as contributing to an evolving emotional bond between dyads (p. 534). These companionable, communicative, attuned, multi-dyadic interactions provide the foundations for essential interpersonal life skills associated with developing relationships, creating attachments with significant others as well as contributing to self-esteem (Saint-Georges et al., 2013). Thus, these early childhood non-verbal musical interactions are thought to play a significant role in the emotional and social development of young children (Forrester, 2009).

Reciprocal vocal exchanges beginning in the earliest months are thought to form the foundations for later linguistic development, as well as being seen as a key to collaborative learning practices (Nomikou et al., 2017). Studies have explored both the linguistic content, as well as the concept of infant agency, resulting from active participation in playful social exchange games (Ratner & Bruner, 1977; Fantasia et al., 2014; Nomikou et al., 2017). Also described as “vocal-kinetic play routines” (Fantasia et al., 2014, p.1), appearance and disappearance games such as ‘peek-a-boo`, with their component parts of anticipation, suspense, tension, climax and release, offer opportunities for mutual interactive as well as reciprocal participation. Identifying features of such games comprise: (1) an individual role or part to play in the turn taking structure, which can be reversed; (2) a temporal order of specific actions; (3) a predictive, repetitive format with a beginning, middle and end, although allowing for variations; as well as (4) a joint responsibility for working towards a specific outcome (Ratner & Bruner, 1977; Nomikou et al., 2017). Thus, these social exchange games played in early infancy, with their interactive communicative elements, can also be portrayed as contributing to the social, development of the young child. Nomikou et al., (2017) describe this process of social interaction:

Social interaction requires the coordination of agents’ independent behavior in a manner that is appropriate within a given culture, relevant to a situation, and efficient in a task at hand (Nomikou et al., 2017, p. 2).

### 3.3 Infant directed speech

Early research studies demonstrate that music has an important part to play in the development of communication and language (Papoušek & Papoušek, 1981; Fernald & Kuhl, 1987; Papoušek, 1994; 1996). Papoušek (1994) describes three levels of vocal expertise that anticipate verbal development. The earliest infant melodic vocal sounds comprise “prolonged euphonic cooing” at about eight weeks of age (Papoušek & Papoušek, 1981). Second, the infant articulates consonants and begins to segment the speech stream into syllables, whilst the third level concerns the “declarative function of vocal symbols and the acquisition of words” (Papoušek & Papoušek, 1981). Further studies such as that of Nakata and Trehub (2004), as well as by Fernald and Kuhl (1987), explore the nature of proto conversations between infant and carer. The authors note, first, the use of ‘infant directed speech’ (ID); second, that very young

children exhibit a preference for this form of communication as compared to 'adult-directed' (AD) speech:

From 4 to 7 weeks of age, if not before, infants are highly responsive to the richly intoned sounds of infant-directed (ID) speech, preferring those to the more muted tones of adult-directed (AD) speech (Nakata & Trehub, 2004, p. 456).

Infant-directed (ID) speech or 'Motherese' is described by Cooper et al., (1997) as "prosodic exaggerations (which) give maternal speech to infants its song-like quality" (1997, p. 477). ID speech can be identified by the following characteristics: parents and carers typically use: (1) a higher pitch level; (2) a wider pitch range; (3) long pauses; (4) short bursts of speech; (5) simplified language; (6) slower tempo; and (7) much repetition (Fernald & Simon, 1984; Fernald, 1985; Fernald & Mazzie, 1991; Saint-Georges et al., 2013). The investigation by Fernald and Kuhl (1987) examined infant auditory preference for motherese by focusing on the relevance of three particular musical elements, those of *pitch* (fundamental frequency,  $F_0$ ); *dynamics* (amplitude) and *duration*. A group of 20, four-month-old infants were participants in three experiments investigating each element in turn by using synthesised non-linguistic stimuli in order to focus on the three prosodic characteristics. The head turn preference protocol was employed. The infants "showed a strong listening preference for the  $F_0$ -patterns of motherese speech, but not for the amplitude or duration" (Fernald & Kuhl, p. 289).

In a more recent study, Piazza, Jordan and Lew-Williams (2017) explored the unique sound colour or timbre of motherese. Improvised, first language naturalistic speech data were recorded during conversations between 24 mothers, their infants and an interviewer. In total, 20 short utterances, of both infant and adult directed speech, were computed using a support vector machine classifier to measure the individual tone colour of each mother's voice. These researchers concluded that "mothers shift the summary statistics of their vocal spectra, thereby altering their unique timbre fingerprints" (Piazza, Jordan & Lew-Williams, 2017, p. 1). Fox (2000) describes ID speech or 'baby talk' to be:

...drenched in musicality; higher pitches; big sweeping contours; simple melodic little ups and downs; sing song rhythms; and drawn-out vowels, rich in overtones (Fox, 2000, p. 25).

Saint-Georges et al., (2013) sum the following linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics of infant-directed speech, further to a search and review of 144 papers across two databases:

IDS is characterized by shorter ..., linguistically simpler, redundant utterances, which include isolated words and phrases, a large number of questions..., and the frequent use of proper names (Saint-Georges et al., 2013, p. 3).

These authors also note that these findings of the full range of ID speech characteristics were observed for familial members such as fathers, mothers, as well as grandmothers across nationalities.

Turning to the functions of ID speech, Fernald further developed her investigations with two studies focusing on the communicative intent of motherese (Fernald, 1989; Fernald & Mazzie, 1991). The first study explored the impact of intonation to communicate intent. Eighty adults were asked to identify the communicative intent of pre-recorded samples in ID and AD (adult-directed) speech, across five categories including expressions of approval, prohibition, comfort, attention-bid, and game initiation. Fernald concluded that:

... the prominent intonation patterns of infant directed speech are both more distinctive and more meaningful than those of adult-directed speech and may provide the preverbal infant with salient prosodic cues to the intent of the speaker (Fernald, 1989, p. 1508).

The second study (1991) explored the use of prosodic emphasis to focused words in a story constructed from a picture book by 18 mothers of 14-month-old infants. Three adjudicative linguistic students were tasked with identifying the primary stress word of each utterance. Fernald and Mazzie (1991) noted that “mothers consistently positioned focused words on exaggerated pitch peaks in utterance-final position” (p. 209). The inference was that these `exaggerated pitch peaks` offer the infant acoustic, prosodic cues which may assist with the processing of speech.

These two studies introduce the notion of the purposes of ID speech, namely communicating intent, as well as offering prosodic cues to help infants with processing the speech stream (Fernald & Mazzie, 1991). Developing this theme of functional purposes, ID speech can be used: (1) to engage the infant's attention and maintain social interaction (Fernald & Simon, 1984; Fernald, 1989; Cooper et al., 1997); (2) to communicate affect or emotional regulation (Fernald & Simon, 1984; Fernald & Kuhl, 1987; Fernald, 1989; Cooper et al., 1997); and finally (3) to contribute to language development. This includes introducing the notions of turn taking, i.e. discourse

structure, as well as syntax and speech segmenting, as mentioned above (Fernald & Simon, 1984; Fernald, 1989; Cooper et al., 1997; Fernald & Morikawa, 1993).

Trainor, Austin and Desjardins (2000) similarly discuss the functions of ID speech, suggesting the possibilities of: (1) gaining attention; (2) assisting with language acquisition by exaggerating vocabulary and grammatical concepts; and (3) communicating information to the infant. Moreover, Trainor et al., (2000) offered a fourth dimension, proposing that “perhaps the most important function of ID speech is to help create and maintain an emotional bond between caregiver and prelinguistic infant” (p. 188). Mothers of 23 infants aged seven to nine months were asked to employ the different expressive emotive styles of love-comfort, fear, and surprise, to exclaim the phrase of “Hey, honey, come over here” (p. 189). The ID speech emotive expressions were compared with AD speech, and five musical ingredients of pitch, pitch contour, pitch range, tempo, and rhythmic contour were measured. The results demonstrated little difference between the five acoustic measures of the infant and adult directed versions of speech. However, the authors described the impact of these measures on the emotional contexts. In other words, the emotive style of love-comfort was lowest in pitch, with descending pitch contours, a narrow pitch range, slower tempo, with the added *accelerando/ritardando* qualities of rhythmic contour. Fear was characterised by a narrow pitch range, centred in the middle, exhibiting flattened pitch contours, faster tempo with a fairly even rhythmic contour. The emotion of surprise was described to be the highest in pitch, with large bell-shaped pitch contours, a broad pitch range, with a slower tempo and an exaggerated version of the *accelerando/ritardando* qualities of rhythmic contour. The authors concluded that “ID speech arises from the vocal expression of emotion” (Trainor et al., 2000, p. 194), noting, that ID prosody is often “accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions of emotion” (Trainor et al., p. 188). Saint-Georges et al., (2013) sum this theme:

IDS may function developmentally to communicate affect, regulate infants’ arousal and attention, and facilitate speech perception and language comprehension (Saint-Georges et al., 2013, p. 8).

Juxtaposing the notions of infant directed speech with affect attunement, research studies suggest that ID speech has an important role to play in the formation of an emotional bond between carer and child dyads (Malloch, 1999; Trevarthen & Malloch, 2002). Malloch (1999) adopted the term ‘communicative musicality’ to portray “those attributes of human communication, which are particularly exploited in music, that allow

co-ordinated companionship to arise” (p. 29). Furthermore, Malloch determined the three component parts of communicative musicality to comprise pulse, quality and narrative. Spectrographic analysis explored the regular timing intervals evident in dyadic vocalisations. Quality refers to both the pitch contour and timbre of the vocalisations. “Pitch plots are derived using software developed for this project using a constant Q spectral transform” (Malloch, 1999, p. 29). Malloch found that the quality of the mother’s voice changes in the course of the mutual communicative episodes, and timbre was measured “with a variety of acoustic measures - tristimulus values, sharpness, roughness and width” (p. 29). Finally, Malloch describes the temporal quality of the notion of the narrative, the mutuality of passing of time in musical companionship, thus concluding that “communicative musicality is vital for companionable parent/infant communication” (p. 29).

To sum, infant directed speech can serve the purposes of engaging attention, maintaining social interaction, communicating affect or emotional regulation, as well as contributing to language development. Discourse structure, by introducing the notion of turn taking, as well as syntax and speech segmenting, as mentioned above, is also considered to be an essential precursor to linguistic development.

### 3.4 Infant directed singing

The culturally and historically ubiquitous practice of infant directed singing shares similar characteristics to ID speech (Trehub, Unyk, & Trainor, 1993; Trainor, 1996; Trehub, 2003; Trehub & Gudmundsdottir, 2019). These include singing at a higher pitch and slower tempo, sustaining vowels, gliding between pitches, mellow in timbre and performed in an emotionally expressive and engaging manner, compared with adult directed (AD) singing (Trehub, Unyk & Trainor, 1993; Trainor, 1996; Trehub et al., 1997; Trainor et al., 1997; Milligan et al., 2003; Nakata & Trehub, 2004; de l’Etoile, 2006).

Findings from research studies exploring this phenomenon suggest that: (1) newborn infants are more attentive to ID singing than to non-ID singing (Masataka, 1999); (2) infants aged six months prefer ID singing to ID speech (Nakata & Trehub, 2004); (3) eight-month-old infants are vocally more responsive to `live` rather than recorded versions of ID singing (de l’Etoile, 2006); (4) mothers alter their singing voices in the

presence of their infants (Trainor, 1996); and (5) thirteen-month-old infants are able to discriminate the melodies sung by the same woman (Costa-Giomi & Davila, 2014).

In addition to playful interaction, infant directed singing is reported to serve various instrumental purposes, such as accompanying daily routines that include preparing a young child for sleep, as well as feeding, bathing or nappy (diaper) changing (Trainor, 1996; Trehub et al., 1997; Nakata & Trehub, 2004). Thus, vocally oriented music, more specifically ID singing, has communicative and regulatory functions (Trehub et al., 1997). As Trainor (1996) notes: "The purpose of a lullaby is literally to lull an infant to sleep. This suggests, then, that music has the power to alter infants' state" (p. 84). Conversely, ID singing can be used for the purposes of arousal and entertainment. Trainor also discusses the emotional, physiological and physical responses to music, noting potential changes in respiration or heart rates, for instance. In a similar fashion, emotive musical episodes can prompt physical responses such as laughter, shivers and tearfulness (Sloboda, 1991).

Two particular genres of ID singing can be identified, namely rhythmic playsongs and lullabies, which are framed by their repetitive quality and simplicity in structure (Unyk et al., 1992; Trainor 1996). The musical characteristics of playsongs comprise:

...increased duration and intensity of stressed syllables, increased intensity range, higher pitch level, more variable pitch, more energy at lower frequencies, slower tempo, and lengthened inter-phrase pauses relative to non-infant-directed playsongs (Bergeson & Trehub, 1999, p. 53).

Rock, Trainor and Addison (1999) report on the differences in the way that infants respond to the two ID singing genres. These authors posit that the infant's focus is introspective during the singing of lullabies, whereas their attention is more outward looking, towards the caregiver during the playsongs. O'Neill, Trainor and Trehub (2001) compare and contrast the difference in performance styles as well as the acoustic features of the two genres, suggesting that:

Mothers' renditions of ID play songs, but not ID lullabies, have increased shimmer (variations in intensity across short time periods), increased pitch variability, and greater rhythmicity (as indicated by the relative duration of stressed to unstressed syllables) compared with IA renditions (O'Neill, Trainor & Trehub, 2001, p. 410).

It can be seen that infant directed singing (and speech) have a significant part to play in the social, emotional and communicative interactions between infants and carers. In

turn, these communications of affect are reported to have profound implications for the development of the emotional bond of attachment between dyads (Trainor, Austin & Desjardins, 2000; Rock, Trainor & Addison, 1999; Ilari, 2002; Milligan et al., 2003; Trevarthen, 2005; Saint-Georges et al., 2013; Trehub & Gudmundsdottir, 2019).

### 3.5 Summary

The intuitive, multimodal, interactive and dialogical musical practices observed between infant and carer begin in early childhood. These reciprocal attuned musical vocalisations are considered to play a significant role in the cognitive, emotional and social development of young children. They are also thought to represent the initial building blocks for linguistic development.

The proto conversations between dyads, referenced as infant directed (ID) speech or 'Motherese' or 'Parentese', are reported to have a set of identifiable musical, linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics. The functions of ID speech have been explored and are reported to serve the purposes of engaging attention, maintaining social interaction, as well as communicating intent, affect or emotional regulation. ID speech is also considered to contribute to the foundations of linguistic development, offering starting points on such aspects as speech perception, discourse structure and language comprehension. The term 'communicative musicality' (Malloch, 1999), referencing the notion of coordinated companionship arising from these early musical exchanges, also has a part to play in developing emotional bonds and attachments.

The culturally and historically ubiquitous practice of infant directed singing shares similar characteristics to ID speech. In addition to playful interaction, ID singing is reported to serve various instrumental purposes. These include communicative and regulatory functions accompanying daily routines. Soothing, calming lullabies are contrasted with rhythmic playsongs which are intended to stimulate, excite and entertain. The theme of the functional or instrumental uses of music which young children may encounter in early childhood anticipates the first research question which seeks to discover the nature of the musical activity contributing to the daily routine in the Reception classroom.

To sum, the research evidence suggests that both ID speech and ID singing have a significant part to play in the social and emotional development of a young child.



Indeed, these early musical dyadic interactions are also believed to be a precursor to communication and language acquisition, as well as child invented song. Chapter 4 reviews the literature exploring the phenomenon of young children`s spontaneous vocalisations, as part of a wider consideration of musical behaviours exhibited in infancy and childhood.

## Chapter 4: Young children`s `musicking`

### 4.1 Introduction

`Musicking`, a term coined by Small (1998), refers to musical participation in its widest sense, incorporating some, or all, of the activities under the umbrella of making music, including: listening, performing, practising, improvising, composing or responding kinaesthetically. Small proposes the notion that music is an activity, a verb, something that people `do`, whether through active or passive engagement:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing (Small, 1998, p. 9).

Two distinctive approaches have been adopted in the study of young children`s `musicking` – the developmental, in other words by age or stage (Moog, 1976; Gordon, 1990; Gruhn, 2002; Welch, 2006) and the ethnographical exploration within situational social, environmental and cultural contexts (Campbell, 1998; Pond, 2014; Sundin, 1997; Young, 2002; Custodero, 2006; Custodero et al., 2016; Tafuri, 2008; Koops, 2014; Barrett, 2006). These two approaches are discussed in turn.

### 4.2 Developmental and behavioural approaches

Gruhn`s approach, in his longitudinal study of the musical development of infant children, was concerned with identifying “procedural structures of children`s perception of and reaction to music” (2002, p. 54). A small study of nine children, aged between one and two years from an urban upper middle-class area in Freiburg, participated in music group sessions with their parent/carer over the course of 15 months. To ascertain that the observed changes of the musically enriched target group were not as a result of generic developmental growth, the experimental results were compared with those of a control group. This class of nine children were drawn from a nursery and participated in their customary programme, without additional musical enrichment. Influenced by the work of Rudolf Laban (an early 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneer of European modern dance), Gruhn (2002) incorporated props and equipment in the music sessions to stimulate and support the children`s flow of movement, with the express purpose of experiencing the metric structure of time and space. Research methods included parental diaries, questionnaires as well as observation, recorded on videotape and

analysed by two independent judges to promote inter-rater reliability. Data was analysed “according to three domains: attention, movement and voice production” (Gruhn, p. 57). Gruhn (2002) categorised the music response findings into five developmental stages or phases: (1) Enculturation – young infants absorb or accommodate the music by being present in the musical environment; (2) Attention – interest is piqued by a sudden awareness of a musical idea that interrupts the flow of previous motivations; (3) Imitation – of movements, lacking in synchronised co-ordination; (4) Co-ordination – matching pulse in chant, song and movement, progressively more in-time and in-tune; and (5) Elaboration – young children begin to improvise, creating their songs. Gruhn provides a working definition of improvisation, that is the “re-organisation of familiar elements in a new and unfamiliar way” (Gruhn, p. 64). The notions of enculturation, imitation and elaboration are encountered and common to both the empirical and ethnographic bodies of literature, exploring the concept of children’s ‘musicking’.

#### 4.2.1 Infant vocalisations

An infant’s first inventive vocalisations are reported to begin with private dialogic musical ‘babbling’ from the age of about two months, in preparation for speech babbling at six or seventh months (Moog, 1976; Bjørkvold, 1989; Tafuri & Villa, 2002; Tafuri, 2008). Moog’s empirical study investigating the stages of musical development of 500 children aged five months to five years, took place under test conditions rather than in free play contexts, in Germany in the 1960s. Moog noted that these early vocalisations consisted mostly of unrhythmical, descending melodic lines with leaps and a wide, although low, pitch range. Moog also observed a change in the function of babbling from creative play to one of communication around nine months of age. Mechthild Papoušek (1996) refined the vocal creative process by outlining six prelinguistic stages of vocal development. The first stage, termed ‘phonation’, occurs as newborn infants learn how to coordinate their breathing with sound production. From two to three months of age, infants practise ‘cooing’, that is they articulate pleasing, melodic contour pitch patterns based on vowel-like sounds. Between four and six months, infants engage in ‘exploratory vocal play’, such as “squealing, growling, screams and whispers, brief staccato noises, drawn out vowel sounds...blowing bubbles, raspberry sounds” (p. 104). ‘Primitive repetitive or canonical babbling’

represents the fourth prelinguistic stage between seven and eleven months. This evolves into `variegated babbling and early words` from nine to thirteen months, leading to the final phase of `one word` utterances from twelve to eighteen months.

Papoušek describes the contrasting forms of musical babbling:

Canonical babbling involves production of regular-beat rhythms with superimposed melodies, short musical patterns or phrases that soon become the core units for a new level of vocal practising and play... (whereas for) variegated babbling...syllabic sequences are sung in short well-structured melodies in which familiar musical elements are combined into new patterns with distinct rhythm and accent (Papoušek, 1996, p. 106).

Moog (1976) observed an increase in spontaneous singing between the ages of one and two years, often based on a single note duration and linked to nonsensical syllables, rather than identifiable words. The first words that children of this age were observed to sing were reported to be usually based on catchy, easily recognizable sound patterns. This led to the notion that very young children learn the rhythmic patterns first, rather than the melodies of songs. Furthermore, the children were more successful at recalling rhythmic patterns when they are associated with word phrases. Moog also noted that children of this age began to follow the general melodic contour of a song. Indeed, by the end of the second year this had developed to being able to sing an inexact version yet combining elements of the words with rhythm and pitch. These findings affirmed the notion that "by the age of 2 every child of normal development can sing" (Moog, 1976, p. 75). Tafuri (2008) developed this further by evidencing that 70% (21:30) of participant children aged two years nine months to three years were able to sing "acceptably in tune at least sometimes, if not always" (Tafuri, p. 66). Three-year-old children imitate songs, singing the words, rhythm and pitch of a single line more or less correctly, although the melodic contour may be followed rather than an accurate repetition (Moog, 1976).

Moog also introduced the notion of `pot-pourri` songs which refers to narrative, imaginative vocal improvisations that combine fragments of words or tunes from well-known songs. These sung monologues can often include nonsensical elements: "The child rearranges and finds new ways of expressing what he has already taken in" (p. 115). Moog observed that three quarters of four-year-old children could sing more or less accurately and that half of four to five-year olds could sing an extended song correctly. Welch (1998, 2006) proposes a similar four phase-based developmental model of singing. The first phase comprises `chant-like` vocalisations where the text is

of primary interest, with a narrow range of falling pitch patterns. Singing general melodic contours, increasing in pitch range, incorporating familiar musical cultural elements are characteristic features of phase two. These developments evolve into children singing mostly accurate melodic contours and intervals. Finally, phase four occurs when “There are no significant melodic or pitch errors in relation to relatively simple songs from the singer’s musical culture” (Welch, 2006, p. 22).

#### 4.2.2. Kinaesthetic responses

Within the topic of children's invented song, it is important to note the juxtaposition of movement and music. Moog (1976) acknowledged the significance of movement as a key feature of young children`s singing practices by tracing a parallel development. Moog notes that the earliest asynchronous motor movement evolves to rocking, bouncing and swaying from six months, to stepping and spinning around from 18 months. This kinaesthetic learning progresses through rocking side to side, swaying backwards and forwards, as well as jumping between two to three years:

Eventually these earliest movements to music develop on the one hand into very precise movements, rhythmically coordinated with the music and on the other hand into motor responses which follow the climaxes, the phrasing or the dynamics of the music (Moog, 1976, p. 58).

More recently, Eerola, Luck and Toivainen (2006) studied the rhythmic and music-synchronization abilities of 28 children aged two to four years. Recording their movements with an optical motion capture system, as well as a video camera, the authors determined that the children exhibited one of three types of movement from hopping, circling or swaying. However, there was little evidence of the children synchronizing their body movements with changes in tempo. The experiment was set in a laboratory environment, managed by strangers. Furthermore, 18 children declined to participate. Removing these potential limitations, perhaps by moving the experiment to a more naturalistic environment, may have yielded divergent results.

### 4.3 Ethnographical approaches

Returning to the main thread, in the 1960s Sundin (1997) undertook a three-year combined, ethnographic and experimental study of children`s invented song in

Stockholm, Sweden. Groups of between ten and twenty children, aged 3.6 to 6.6 years, were observed during free play in three kindergartens. Naturalistic observations of the children's invented songs were compared with the reproduction of well-known songs. Sundin considered that children's invented songs were often fleeting and perhaps unnoticed by adults:

... this singing falls outside the adult-oriented concept of music, a concept which sets a boundary for our understanding of the children's songs (Sundin, 1997, p. 52).

Sundin's descriptions of group chant-like and solo introspective songs echo the findings of another seminal study exploring spontaneous musical creativity. Set in California, USA, between 1937 and 1944, the participant sample comprised fifteen to twenty, randomly selected (not musically gifted), three-to six-year-old children enrolled in the Pillsbury Foundation School. Donald Pond's perception of his role as Music Director was to observe, respond to technical enquiries, join in the music making by invitation only and keep accurate records. Pond (2014) observed two types of spontaneous vocalisation, naming them 'song' and 'chant'. He describes the former as "personal, unpremeditated, and evanescent, which made them extremely difficult to capture" (p. 47). Subsequent analysis determined that these melodies were pitched within a narrow range, rhythmically free, although with occasional added 'exuberant melismas', and possibly accompanied by 'imaginative, descriptive, anecdotal, lyrical, or nonsensical' words (p. 47). Pond's analysis of the two-note melodic chant, on the other hand, records that this was (1) usually grounded in a descending minor third pitch pattern; (2) often sung in call and response form; and (3) with children from the group joining in imitation or with improvised rhythmic variations. Pond noted that "Impromptu singing games that used chants were a favourite form of spontaneous, communal music making at the school" (Pond, 2014, p. 47).

Noteworthy is Pond's view on the subject of the origins of musical creativity, in response to the contrasting views of whether it is related to an impulse for self-expression or perhaps more allied to the innate, aesthetic pleasure of musical exploration:

What seems to me to be a major and destructive misconception is the notion that musical creativity in early childhood originates from a compulsion for self-expression. The compulsion that I observed was for being a maker, an inventor of sound shapes, and for creating linear movement and enjoying the patterns that simultaneously moving lines of sounds could produce (Pond, 2014, p. 48).

Pond's thoughts segue into the topic of the functions of music, a key focus for this study (Research question 1). Pond introduces the notions of self-expression, creativity and aesthetic pleasure as possible purposes, should it be deemed necessary to ascribe meaning and a role for spontaneous musical exploration.

Merriam (1964), in Chapter XI of the 'Anthropology of music', differentiates between the uses, in other words "the ways in which music is employed in human society", and the functions of music, "which concerns the reasons for its employment and particularly the broader purpose which it serves" (p. 210). Merriam lists ten possible functions which can be categorised into two groups – personal and communal. The personal functions of music might comprise aesthetic pleasure; entertainment; communication; symbolic representation; as well as eliciting a physical response. The second group could be described as more social or communally oriented. For, music can help sustain and contribute to culture; support and facilitate integration into society; promote conformity to social norms; as well as support the validation of social institutions and religious rituals.

#### 4.3.1 Musical environments

Campbell's (1998) ethnographic treatise considered a range of functions of children's music making, observed in a variety of environments (such as in the playground, preschool yard, school canteen, music room, school bus and toy shop). Children aged four to twelve years were observed for one year. Children were drawn from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. These ranged from lower, through middle income, to a few affluent families from both urban and suburban districts of an American metropolis. As a non-participant observer, Campbell sought to explore children's informal musicking. Data collection comprised open-ended free flow interviews, field notes, transcribed audio and videotape recordings, as well as musical notations. Based on the aforementioned ethnographic study concerning the functions of music (Merriam, 1964), Campbell identified the purposes of spontaneous music making to include aesthetic fulfilment; emotional expression e.g., venting emotions or exhibiting high spirits; aesthetic enjoyment; entertainment; communication; and physical and/or kinaesthetic response. Campbell also noted the contribution that spontaneous, musical, vocal interludes make to occasions of social, cultural or religious ritual.

Custodero (2006) has also studied the functions of spontaneous singing behaviours of three-year-old children in the homes of ten families in New York City. In an ethnographic study that employed such research instruments as journals, interviews, observations, field notes and case study, families were found to use singing for functional purposes, creating an accompanying soundtrack to their daily schedule. This use of song, either learned or improvised, would be integrated into the web and weave of their day-to-day timetable, occurring at specific points, such as mealtimes, naptimes, bath time, housework and bedtime. Custodero also noted a second, slightly less common function of song occurring in 4:10 of the family homes, namely 'creating and maintaining traditions' (p. 53). Two potential biases should be taken into account in consideration of the above findings. The first results from the impact of the unusual scenario of the status of the researcher as participant observer within the family homes, and the second references the self-selection of the participant families. Although representative in terms of a cross section of age, ethnic and socio-economic status, when considering the potential generalisability of findings, a query could be raised related to the high level of education bias.

A more recent study, Custodero, Cali and Diaz-Donoso (2016) explored children's spontaneous music making in the public setting of the subways of New York City: "The subway presents a unique environment, both structurally predictable yet sonically dynamic; it is in continuous transition" (p. 55). This followed a pilot study researching music making in public spaces in Taipei, Taiwan, where a checklist or protocol of exemplar, as well as possible behaviours, materials and functions was trialled. Findings from the pilot study included "a pervasiveness of movement; invented vocal material, most often in a solitary context; and a complex array of adult-child interactions" (p. 59). The aim of the subsequent American study was to "observe naturally occurring phenomena" (p. 60). Over the course of three weekends, seven to ten observers spent two to three hours in a randomly chosen subway carriage, documenting improvised musical behaviours on an observational protocol form. Detailed narrative descriptions of the spontaneous musical events were written up afterwards. Observed musical behaviours from the 69 recorded episodes of children from infancy (66%: 0-5yrs), without a gender bias, included 4:5 children using their voices to sing, chant, hum or for spontaneous vocalisations. Vocal play was most common, although movement was noted in almost half of the episodes. Musical play was mostly observed to be solitary; used to comfort or entertain self (50%); or communicate with others (1:3) and was



deemed to comprise invented material rather than reproduced repertoire. Custodero et al., report:

We looked at an everyday setting, a bounded environment with a singular purpose moving people—a metaphorical transitional space. Here, children found affordances for music making (Custodero et al., 2016, p. 62).

Children`s car seats in family vehicles also present a similar bounded environment for children`s music making. This was the focus of Koops` (2014) qualitative case study of nine young children, aged 10 months to 4.5 years. Over the course of nine weeks, data was collected in the form of parent journal observations; videos of both music making in vehicles and in early childhood music classes; researcher field notes, as well as exit e-mail interviews with parents. Koops noted that children`s musical activities in this particular confined space included singing, movement, listening to music, composing and improvising. As well as singing known songs, children frequently engaged in spontaneous vocalizations which were described as introspective, improvisatory, typically without words, and more usually vocalised by the youngest children in the study, often when they were looking out of the car. Observed advantages for music making in the bounded environment of the family vehicle included the impact of the physical space dividing parent and child, between the front and back of the car. This divide between the front and back seats in the vehicle may have afforded greater sibling interactions due to close fixed proximity, as well as “helped children feel a greater sense of independence and freedom in their music making” (Koops, 2014, p. 61). Limitations of the study may include both the possibilities of ‘insider’ effect, as the author assumed the dual roles of early years music class leader and researcher, as well as the potential influence of the `home assignments` given to the parents.

#### 4.3.2 Child-invented song

The strategies that young children employ in the course of their spontaneous vocalisations have been the focus of a number of research studies (Hanus Papoušek, 1996; Mechthild Papoušek, 1996; Barrett, 2006, 2009; Young, 2002, 2004). Barrett`s (2006) two-year longitudinal study of young children (aged four to six years) in a kindergarten setting, explored the creative elements of their early music making as ‘composers, song-makers and notators’. Recorded evidence included video footage of the observational and verbal data, researcher transcriptions of children`s musicking, as well as children`s musical notations. Focusing on the invented song of a four-year-old girl, Charlie, the case study evidenced the following musical characteristics: (1)

thematic unity; (2) generative elaboration, occurring ‘through the processes of ‘repetition, accentuation, theme and variation’’ (Barrett, 2006, p. 216); (3) exploration of dynamics by repeating and altering the volume level - one means of contributing to the creation of (4) musical tension, also demonstrated by incorporating ‘anticipation, surprise, and often ... building to a climax with eventual resolution’ (p. 216). Thus, Barrett recommends that careful attention should be given to “children’s musical agency as song makers” (p. 218), and that their musical practices should be valued, celebrated, and fostered in early childhood settings.

In the light of the creative musical accomplishments of this young girl, Barrett goes onto challenge the conventional early childhood group recreative musical practice comprising the:

... ensemble performance of nursery rhymes and songs, finger-plays, action songs, alphabet and counting songs, and associated structured movement and instrumental play that emphasizes beat and rhythm (Barrett, 2006, p. 218).

Barrett does not negate the value of these musical activities, rather she suggests their benefit may be extrinsic – in other words, helpful in developing other curricular learning areas. Much has been written about the extrinsic value of music and the debate to justify its place in the curriculum is longstanding (Pitts, 2017; Rainbow & Cox, 2006; Črnčec, Wilson & Prior, 2006; Hallam, 2006; Harris, 2011). Indeed, Hallam (2004) describes the depth and breadth of the power of music, not least encompassing the impacts on both individual and social groups, as well as the therapeutic contribution music makes to health and wellbeing. With an ever increasingly crowded curriculum and national priorities focusing on literacy and numeracy, as well as issues of league tables and accountability, it is perhaps little wonder that the instrumental functions of music are being advocated in order to justify its worth and place.

#### 4.3.3 Improvised instrumental play

A separate, yet intersecting body of literature researches the parallel thread of young children’s creative musical exploration through instrumental play (Young, 1995, 2003, 2008; Gluschkof, 2002, 2005; Parker, 2013). Nursery and pre-school settings provided the locations for Susan Young’s studies of young children’s self-initiated musical play. The 2003 study was situated in an ‘artificial’ nursery musical environment since “the instrumental set-ups were partly imported and sometimes further contrived or manipulated” (Young, 2003, p. 49). The xylophone replaced the traditional

classroom percussion instruments during phase two of this research study on account of the broad range of affordances it offered the children. A total of 95 children, aged three and four years, based in three nurseries in south-west London provided the participant population. Further to a pilot phase in the first nursery, Young attended the second and third nurseries for ten weekly visits, video recording the children's music play in the music area for one hour each. The video data was analysed by the researcher in 30 second intervals, particularly noting interpersonal interactions and children's activities. A sample of the data was also independently reviewed by an impartial and experienced 'outsider'.

Some of the music play episodes that Young observed and analysed were brief, approximating 30 seconds in duration, whilst others lasted several minutes. Activity types were categorised into two relevant broad groups: (1) instrumental music making; and (2) hybrid instrumental making, described as "creating connections, blendings and fusions" – for instance with known songs or movement or narratives (Young, 2003, p. 51). Further interpretation of instrumental music making evinced two interrelated notions. First – spatial structures – concerned with "the moving child and the instrument morphology in relation to one another" (p. 52). The second notion referenced time-based structures 'the timing, clustering and contouring of movements to create effects in time' (p. 52). Young proceeds with descriptions of forms of spatial structures that the children created, including: (1) trace forms, in other words "creating spatial patterns arising from the placing of their playing movements in relation to the instrument structure" (p. 52); (2) pathways, comprising ordered patterns from a starting to ending point; and (3) action forms, such as striking; swinging; dabbing with jerky, quick and smaller movements; and glissandi, perhaps with a 'zigzag' or 'scrubbing' motion. Young also considered notions regarding 'body sidedness' and 'crossing the body midline' (2003).

Time-based structuring of children's musical play with the xylophone was also evidenced, analysed and interpreted under three broad categories. Children's immersion in sustained repetitive playing actions was observed. "The repetition created a co-resonance of multi-modal sensations of sound, movement and tactility" (Young, 2003, p. 54). A second time-based structure 'clustering' was noted and described as "a single action, such as a vertical strike or short, horizontal sweep, could be repeated in a group, or cluster, of identical movements which was then followed by a pause" (p.

54). `Chaining` represented the third form and refers to the sequential repetition of a spatial-action motif. This idea could be `chained` for some time or undergo transformations, which may occur suddenly or gradually; perhaps forming an internal motivation; or as a response to an external stimulus. Transformations could also vary from incorporating new material, referencing previous ideas or progressing to a new motif.

Young summed her findings, proposing two notions. First, that children`s instrumental music play should not be deemed `aimless or random`, rather, that it is imbued with a sense of `purpose and direction`. The second notion references the total embodied dimension of musical play:

Considered from the child`s perspective, the sounding result is inseparable from bodily involvement. The sounding ideas are perceived as analogues of their movement, one facet of an inter-sensory whole (Young, 2003, p. 55).

This seminal study, observing and interpreting children`s spontaneous instrumental play, makes a highly significant contribution to the current thread on the subject of young children`s inherent musicality. In order to acknowledge this finding, Young calls for "broader, more inclusive conceptions of music and musical processing" (p. 54). Furthermore, Young`s observations of children`s spontaneous instrumental music making caused her to re-think the listening role of the adult, from a passive to an active one:

The adult playfully participates with the child and takes responsibility for 'scaffolding' the child's emerging music making (Young, 1995, p. 51).

Collaborative instrumental play between three-and four-year-olds in nursery settings in South West London provided the particular focus for Young`s 2008(b) study, adding another dimension to this thread. Unedited video recordings totalling 17 hours from the original study, comprising five episodes of paired play, ranging from six to fifteen minutes in duration, provided the additional data for analysis. New research questions concerning collaborative play were applied to the data. The xylophone was supplemented with additional percussion instruments including bongos, individual chime bars, as well as handheld percussion including small drums. A detailed analytical process of repeatedly reviewing and comparing the five selected samples in time-frame intervals of five seconds, led to the finding that each musical episode consisted of six phases. These comprised: (1) initial mutual accommodation; (2)

synchronisation; (3) less coordinated exploration of complex ideas; (4) change of direction, communicated through gestural and verbal directives; (5) attuned coordination of playing, varying the tempo, leading to a climatic pinnacle of collaborative achievement; and (6) winding down and disengagement. Young observed that the children called upon a repertoire of non-verbal `communicative and expressive behaviours` to coordinate their instrumental play:

Their collaboration was achieved through gestures, direction of gaze and eye contact, facial expression, bodily movement, posture and body alignment in relation to one another. These collaborative mechanisms were combined, integrated or fused with the actions required to produce sound (Young, 2008b, p. 3).

The `catchment` from which the participants were drawn for these two studies, namely, “an area of high rise and small link housing mostly rented from the local authority” (Young, 2008b, p. 6.) could be deemed noteworthy. Whilst the sample could be described as `skewed downwards`, in terms of economic deprivation indices, one could argue that these participants could be considered more representative of the general population. For, the inherent musicality evidenced in these samples was perhaps less influenced by socioeconomic biases, such as the higher disposable income used to support children`s extra-curricular activities associated with affluent or middle-class parents (Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014; Črnčec, Wilson & Prior, 2006).

Parker (2013) offers a unique contemporary perspective on the subject of young children's spontaneous music play, in the form of a case study exploring the musical behaviours of her young son (Tim) who was four years of age at the time. Parker acknowledged both the advantages (unique attunement) and put in place compensatory measures to address the potential pitfalls (maternal bias) of ‘parent as researcher’. The initial role of being a non-participant observer and active listener evolved to “responding non-verbally, imitative play partnering to contributory play-partnering” (p. 3). Data collection methods comprised video recorded observations; less intrusive audio recordings, using a mobile telephone; as well as field notes. Parker (2013) presents a number of vignettes as evidence of a range of spontaneous musical behaviours. The second vignette portrays Tim`s embodied musical play, exploring note clusters on the piano with his Mother. The improvisatory musical episode demonstrates structure akin to a rondo form, or `chaining` as described by Young (2003) above. Beginning with repeated note clusters, ascending and descending simultaneously, Tim employed a two-note repeated motif as his constant thematic idea, alternating this with a five-note repeated pattern. A dramatic episode was also incorporated, with a pause

to create tension and release, culminating in a grand finale with consecutive then simultaneous chord clusters. This vignette also serves to reinforce Young's findings, discussed above, concerning the intentionality of the embodied musical play of young children.

These vignettes and ethnographic case studies of children's spontaneous music making provide further evidence of the musicality of very young children. Campbell (1998) notes that children's musical engagement often "gets unrecognized by adults ...[and] that children's engagement in music frequently is paid minimal attention by teachers and parents" (p. 5). In a similar vein, Gluschkof (2005) posits that the adult may not value children's spontaneous musical expressions, nor be aware of the "musical qualities inherent in them" (p. 326). This is of particular concern for the current study in that it is argued that Reception teachers need to be able to: (1) identify and value a child's 'musicking'; (2) comprehend that it differs from the traditional recreative and performance biases of adult music making; as well as (3) have some understanding of creative musical possibilities, in order to be able to facilitate further learning and development. Gluschkof continues by describing the holistic experience of young children's musical play:

Music making is a unified event, created and experienced through four sensory modalities: the aural, the tactile, the kinaesthetic and the visual (Gluschkof, 2005, p. 329).

A more recent study explores the theme of musical play from the perspective of children's enjoyment (Koops, 2017). Adopting a phenomenological lens, the aim was to discover both the impact of enjoyment on children's music making as well as the constituent characteristics. 12 children aged 4-to 7-years attended an extracurricular music class for a period of 15 weeks. Data collection instruments comprised class and home video analyses, participant observation, as well as interviews. Findings from the children's 'lived experience' of enjoyment during musical play described five elements:

... including active musical engagement, signs of physical engagement, a balance of familiarity and novelty, inclusion of activities allowing for student control or choice, and a safe and playful environment (Koops, 2017, p. 360).

Koops (2017) also described the functions characterising the enjoyment to be found in musical play. These included the importance of establishing a balance between structure and freedom, together with the essential ingredient of children's musical agency. Three potential limitations of the study comprise: (1) 'insider effect', as the

author assumed the dual role of early years music class leader and researcher; (2) the young participants were not new to this type of music making; and (3) the children had also been involved in earlier research studies. Nevertheless, Koops' findings support the literature on 'flow' theory and early childhood music (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Custodero, 2002, 2005; Stamou & Mouchtaroglou, 2012). Custodero (2005) offers a definition for the state of 'flow':

An activity considered highly challenging, coupled with confidence in one's abilities to meet that challenge, results in optimal experience, or 'flow' (Custodero, 2005, p. 186).

In an earlier study, Custodero (2002) had proposed that this process of optimal experience of 'flow' offers an intrinsic value for music and so a rationale for music education:

The dynamism created by challenging, intrinsically rewarding activity and requisite skill suggests that the identification of flow in learning environments should inform pedagogical practices (Custodero, 2002, p. 5).

Furthermore, the long-term impact of this optimal experience of music learning and development, characterised by such elements as focused engagement, high motivation and sense of autonomy, "would optimally lead to a proclivity toward lifelong music inquiry" (p. 7).

This chapter has reviewed studies from two theoretical perspectives, namely the positivistic, "made up of facts and theories which can be falsified or verified through the testing of hypotheses" (Griffiths, 2015<sup>3</sup>) and the naturalistic, "the passive observation of behaviour in naturally occurring situations, rather than any active intervention from the researcher such as occurs in an experiment" (Colman, 2015<sup>4</sup>). These complementary perspectives serve to present an evidence-based case for: (1) the innate musicality of young children; thus implying that (2) this intrinsic ability is universal, not the purview of the gifted few; (3) music should be valued in its own right; and (4) musical opportunities and experiences should be inclusive, for all, rather than exclusive to any perceived

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from:

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199679393.001.0001/acref-9780199679393>

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from:

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199657681.001.0001/acref-9780199657681>

`talented` minority. Indeed, Niland (2009) sums this thread, suggesting that “the innate musicality of young children (should be nurtured) so that they become and remain music makers throughout their lives” (Niland, 2009, p. 20).

#### 4.4 Digital technologies and screen media

A growing body of literature reports on the impact and use of digital technologies and screen media with reference to young children from the age of six months upwards. Ilari (2011) notes that “digital technologies and electronic media appear to be omnipresent in the lives of young children in current times” (p. 58). A range of studies provide statistical evidence to support this claim (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011; Taylor, Monaghan & Westermann, 2018; Bedford et al., 2016). Ofcom (2016) describe the marked increase of time spent online and that children aged 3-4 are more likely to use a tablet for audiovisual viewing, including YouTube content. Both Lamont (2008) and Ilari (2011) comment on the prevalence of CD players in the home, reporting that participant children as young as 3.5 years and 5 to 24 months, respectively, have CD players in their rooms. Furthermore, Ilari notes that “some very young children are already manipulating their own stereos, digital players and technological gadgets without any difficulties” (p. 61). Indeed, portable devices with touch screens are reported to be intuitive to use, facilitating independent access for pre-school aged children (Bedford et al., 2016; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016; AAP, 2016; Young, 2018).

Young children can access and interact with this aural soundscape in increasingly diverse ways. Media include: (1) television and radio programmes; (2) using devices such as iPods/mp3 players, mobile/smart phones, CDs, and DVDs; (3) educational CD-ROMs, Karaoke, video games and gaming consoles such as Xboxes and PlayStations; (4) the computer, tablets and iPads, the internet including YouTube videos; (5) E books; as well as (6) `smart` toys offering personalised responses via the internet, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth connection (Brito, Dias & Oliveira, 2018).

Parents and carers cite the educational value of these technological musical products as a purchasing rationale (Young, 2008a; AAP, 2011; Brito et al., 2018; Brooks, 2015; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016). The AAP policy statement (2016) notes that research studies have found educational benefits, such as improved cognitive, literacy and social outcomes for children aged 3 to 5 years, but not for those younger than two



years (p. 2). Marketing campaigns by well-known and trusted toy companies capitalise on this notion of educational benefit, particularly in the respect of the promise to develop literacy and numeracy skills (Levin & Rosenquest, 2001; Brooks, 2015). However, the AAP policy statement (2016) suggests that these...

... target only rote academic skills, are not based on established curricula, and use little or no input from developmental specialists or educators (AAP, 2016, p. 2).

Several studies comment on the marketing techniques of this growing sector, targeting the youngest children using branded logos and/or cartoon characters (Brooks, 2015; Levin & Rosenquest, 2001; Persellin, 2016).

Some studies describe the functions of these modern technologies, such as background music providing companionship both in the home and whilst travelling in the car (Lum, 2008; Roulston, 2006; Young & Gillen, 2007; AAP, 2011). The soothing sounds of cot mobiles and CDs are reported to serve a regulatory emotional function by lulling babies and young children to sleep (Young, 2008a). Smartphones and tablets can serve as source of distraction, particularly in public spaces (Radesky, Schumacher & Zuckerman, 2015), or used by adults to occupy and entertain children whilst taking “a break from parenting” (Ilari, 2011, p. 61). Indeed, the American Pediatric Association (2011) report that some parents “avoid co-viewing because their child’s media time provides an opportunity for them to do other things” (p. 1041).

Some authors comment on the limitations of the repetitive nature of some digital musical toys and media (Levin & Rosenquest, 2001), or the potential impact on social-emotional, as well as physical well-being (Radesky, Schumacher & Zuckerman, 2015). Indeed, concerns have been raised with regard to the negative impact of these mobile screen media on: (1) spontaneous exploratory play; (2) embodied gross motor activity; (3) open-ended imaginative and creative play; and (4) possibly resulting in aggressive behaviours and attention issues in school-aged children. Further matters for concern comprise: delayed language development; physical health and wellbeing; negative impact on sleep patterns; reducing the opportunities for parent-child-sibling interactions, as well as musical social interactions (Bedford et al., 2016; de Vries, 2007; AAP, 2011; Brooks, 2015; Radesky et al., 2015; Nansen & Jayemanne, 2016; Ofcom, 2016; Young, 2018; Galpin & Taylor, 2018; House of Commons, 2019).

Counterpoint to these notions of constraints and limitations of digital musical practices and products are the findings that record that young children’s engagement is far from

passive. These include opportunities to: (1) “learn, connect and create” (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016, p. 4); (2) to sing and dance (Lamont, 2008; Young, 2008a); (3) develop fine motor skills (Burton & Pearsall, 2016); as well as (4) contribute to language and cognitive development (Bedford et al., 2016). Radesky, Schumacher and Zuckerman (2015) note a key interpersonal benefit of videophone apps that facilitate face-to-face interactions, enabling in-the-moment communication with perhaps geographically displaced family members. Despite listing their reservations, actively discouraging media use for children younger than two years of age, the American Academy of Pediatrics (2011) acknowledge the potential benefits of media for older children, including “improved social skills, language skills and even school readiness” (p. 1041).

Rules and restrictions such as limiting access, monitoring use and adding technical filters are purposed to protect children from the potential harmful effects referenced above (AAP, 2011; Ofcom, 2016; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016). These approaches can be contrasted with the more active, enabling or `intermediary` strategies, such as: (1) co-viewing; (2) goal-directed; (3) socially interactive; (4) discursive; as well as (5) parental engagement in meaningful content (Nansen & Jayemanne, 2016; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016; Galpin & Taylor, 2018). Brito, Dias and Oliveira (2018) also advocate a more proactive style of participatory and instructional scaffolding on the part of the adult to facilitate children`s development of digital media skills. A combination of approaches is recommended:

Research shows that parents who use a combination of approaches, modelling positive digital behaviours and involving their children in setting limits, have children who are more able to access the potential of, and manage the challenges presented by, digital media (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016, p. 4).

Galpin and Taylor (2018) note that both academic research as well as national policy struggle to keep up with the rapid increase of technical innovation. Similarly, the paucity of longitudinal research on this topic, as well as the limitations of cross-sectional, `one moment in time` findings, as well as the prevalence of correlational rather than `cause and effect` research studies are acknowledged (AAP, 2011; House of Commons, 2019; Galpin & Taylor, 2018). Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2016) suggest that parental guidance, which concentrates on the quantifiable measures of how long children spend engaging with digital media, could be construed as

misleading. These authors recommend, that more nuanced questions should perhaps focus on such issues as...

screen *context* (where, when and how digital media are accessed), *content* (what is being watched or used), and *connections* (whether and how relationships are facilitated or impeded) (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016, p. 4).

This finding segues into the rationale for including this topic in the current study. Twofold, first, this discourse references the cultural capital<sup>5</sup>, in the form of technological experiences and expertise that young children bring into school from their home environment (Young, 2009, p.703). Second, to highlight the creative potential music technology can offer children in the Reception class (Upitis, 1989; McDowall, 2003; Burton & Pearsall, 2016). However, Reception teachers need to be both informed and able to discern which software programmes are “designed to promote children`s musical growth” (Burton & Pearsall, 2016, p. 87).

#### 4.5 Early childhood neuromyths

A digression into the rise of the `neuromyth` is seen as pertinent at this juncture in the literature review, as this emerging phenomenon often serves to justify both the value of music, as well as overstate the importance of an early childhood developmental window. Several meta-analysis studies report evidence and findings on the prevalence of the neuromyths pertinent to either early childhood education and/or music (Lonie, 2010; Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014; Howard-Jones, 2014; Odendaal, Levänen & Westerlund, 2019).

The longstanding debate regarding the functional value of music originates from the times of the ancient Greeks: “It was thus as a vehicle and mnemonic for verbal instruction that music found its initial role in education” (Rainbow & Cox, 2006, p. 15). The modern-day resurgence of this phenomenon coincides with academic research developments in the scientific studies of the brain and references the use of ‘neuromyths’ or ‘transfer theory’ benefits to justify the value of music (Črnčec, Wilson & Prior, 2006). Neuromyths are seen to arise from the oversimplification, misinformation, misinterpretation, overgeneralisation and perhaps biased distortion of the kernels of knowledge presented in the research findings from the field of neuroscience (Goswami,

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<sup>5</sup> Cultural capital represents those accumulated competencies that contribute to one`s sense of power or status within a given field or context (Bourdieu, 1991).

2006; Pasquinelli, 2012; Peterson 2011; Papatzikis, 2017; Odendaal, Levänen & Westerlund, 2019).

Those pertinent to the current discourse comprise: (1) the primary importance of the first three years for learning and development; and (2) that enriched, stimulating learning environments are required to enhance the brain's developmental capacity in early childhood (Papatzikis, 2017; Wall et al., 2015; OECD, 2018; Bruer, 2011; Odendaal, Levänen & Westerlund, 2019; Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) suggests that this second neuromyth can be challenged by noting that the findings are derived from experimental research using rats, rather than verifying such results with human subjects. A further point concerns the ongoing capacity of the human brain to form synapses, a feature of plasticity, throughout life (Bruer, 2011; Papatziki, 2017; Wall et al., 2015).

Neuromyth number (3) references `critical` periods, or finite learning `windows` for developing particular skills in the early years. A `sensitive period` is the preferred term to describe a longer stage of development "when specific kinds of experiences have particularly pronounced effects" (Bruer, 2011, p. 6). `Critical periods` imply specific and limited time windows of opportunity for neural connections to be made and synaptic growth to occur. This myth, overstating the case for optimal learning windows, fails to take into account evidence of life-long learning and the different occurring rates of maturation of the human brain (Pasquinelli, 2012). The fourth neuromyth (4) claims that children have a preferred mode of learning, selected from the visual, auditory or kinaesthetic styles. This neuromyth has been challenged with reference to the brain's capacity for interconnectivity: "Learning depends on neural networks distributed across multiple brain regions: visual, auditory *and* kinaesthetic" (Goswami, 2015, p. 6).

The second source of functional justification for the place of music in the curriculum references the reported `transfer` benefits of musical processes. Transfer theories imply that learning from one domain can cross to another where similar cognitive processes are shared (Hallam, 2004). The claim that the visuo-spatial and spatio-temporal reasoning skills gained from musical learning and practice may transfer to other tasks across contexts is recorded by Črnčec, Wilson and Prior (2006), as well as Harris (2011). Indeed, Habibi et al., (2018) note that musical performance

demonstrates the “auditory, somatosensory, and visual (sensory) systems (interacting) with the motor, executive, and affective systems” engaging “three components of executive function: inhibition, working memory, and cognitive flexibility” (Habibi et al., p. 73).

A considerable body of research provides evidence that music and language share similar processing capabilities (Patel, 2003; 2008; 2011) and that there is a near transfer effect relationship between music and some linguistic skills, including phonemic discrimination (Goswami, 2006; Hallam, 2004; Lonie, 2010; Harris, 2011; Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014, amongst others). However, it would be premature to suggest that the cognitive and executive functions of musical learning are automatically transferable across domains, especially as what counts as music comes in so many different forms. Neuroscience research remains in its relative infancy and further investigations are required to test the validity, reliability and generalisation of such claims (Črnčec, Wilson & Prior, 2006). Similarly, researchers suggest that there are other potential variables to be accounted for. These comprise socioeconomic status; environmental influences; personal, social and emotional predispositions; supportive familial attitudes; as well as experiential opportunities for learning (Harris, 2011; Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014; Črnčec, Wilson & Prior, 2006).

Furthermore, caution must be expressed, for as Odendaal, Levänen and Westerlund (2019) note, confusion may prevail between the notions of ‘correlation and causation’, in other words:

A relationship *may* exist between the study of music and excellence in other subjects, but participation in music does not necessarily *cause* improvements in other learning areas (Odendaal, Levänen & Westerlund, 2019<sup>6</sup>, emphasis in original).

To sum this discussion concerned with the extrinsic value attributed to the functions of music related to recent advances in neuroscience. Neuroscientific research is still in a state of relative infancy and confirmed meaningful effects on education are yet to emerge. Simmonds (2014) concludes from her findings on the impact of neuroscience

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<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/blogs/equally-well/lost-translation-allure-neuromyths-advocating-arts>

on education that the “teachers’ desire to implement interventions based upon neuroscience is running ahead of the evidence base” (Wellcome Trust, 2014, p. 10).

#### 4.6 WEIRD populations

A final consideration must be noted regarding the representativeness of the participants of the vast bulk of the studies described thus far and the associated implications for universal generalisation. For example, a comparative analysis study of research articles drawn from six behavioural science journals, chosen as being representative of the sub disciplines of psychology from 2003-2007, reported that 96% test subjects were drawn from ‘Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies’ (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). The authors concluded that the findings from this set of studies may not ‘reflect the full breadth of human diversity’ (p. 63). Blum (2017) takes this notion a step further by suggesting that it may not be appropriate to draw conclusions on the subject of childhood on the basis of findings drawn from participant samples of high-achieving middle-class White Western subjects, also noting that samples often comprised university students.

#### 4.7 Summary

Reviewing the literature on the topic of young children’s spontaneous musical play has been the principal focus for Chapter 4. Young children’s ‘musicking’ (Small, 1998) was explored from two distinctive methodological perspectives, namely the developmental (or behavioural) and ethnographic, in other words located within situational social, environmental and cultural contexts. The former tends to focus on the linear progression of children’s musical development. Moog (1976) also traced a parallel model of development for movement and music. The notion of ‘pot-pourri’ songs (Moog, 1976), acknowledging children’s imaginative vocal improvisations, introduced the naturalistic observations of the spontaneous musical behaviours of young children during free play (Pond, 2014). The discussion incorporated children’s ‘musicking’ in such diverse environments as the playground, New York subway and family vehicle. Reporting on the complex range of musical characteristics that children incorporate both into their song-making, as well as instrumental play, led to the conclusion that

children's spontaneous musical play should be valued, celebrated and encouraged in early childhood settings.

The functional purposes of music were introduced. Initially, classified in two groups, personal and social, Hallam (2004) added the therapeutic power of music, identifying the contribution music can make to health and wellbeing.

The final three sections of this chapter considered the benefits and challenges presented by the advent of digital technologies and screen media; the `neuromyth` and `WEIRD` populations. A technological soundscape can be accessed in an increasingly number of diverse ways, even by the youngest of children. The functions, limitations and benefits of digital technologies and screen media were debated. Attention was drawn to first, the possible disjunct between use of technology across home and school environments. Second, that whilst digital technologies and screen media have the potential to offer creative and developmental musical opportunities, knowledge of and understanding is required to make informed developmentally appropriate decisions.

A contemporary phenomenon, the `neuromyth` was reviewed. Arising from the oversimplification, misinformation, misinterpretation or overgeneralisation of neuroscience research findings, three such early childhood neuromyths were discussed and debunked. This was on account of prematurely published scientific results, lacking verification and validity, that would be expected from extended periods of testing. Theories promulgating transfer effect, often used to justify the place of music in the curriculum, were also discussed and contested. Further to the advice that it is too early to suggest that the cognitive and executive functions of musical learning are automatically transferable across domains.

The final section of this fourth chapter challenged the representativeness of the participants tested. In the main, experimental subject samples were noted to have originated from 'Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies' (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010).

To sum, this chapter was concerned with reviewing the literature on the topic of young children's spontaneous musical play. The aim was twofold. First to further evidence children's inherent musicality by demonstrating and raising awareness of the quality of children's `musicking`. Second, to justify the value, intrinsic worth and aesthetic purposes of early childhood music making, in contrast with the functional, extrinsic justifications offered by those promoting cognitive and academic transfer benefits.

## Chapter 5: Early childhood education

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter five explores the theme of the distinct Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) of the education continuum, with particular reference to the associated specialised pedagogy for this age group, as well as identifying the implications for musical learning and development. In advance of tracing the emergence of the EYFS in England, it is pertinent to note some international differences in the age children start their formal school education. Referenced in Chapter 1, the compulsory school age differs widely from country to country. In Australia and Ireland children begin formal schooling at four or five years of age, or in the year of their fifth birthday in England, whilst in Finland and Sweden it rises to seven years. A secondary factor concerns the positioning of this particular cohort in the education continuum and whether the age group 4 to 5 years is located within the early childhood education and care framework, or within the statutory school system. These factors contribute to the complexity of international comparisons. The Reception Year of schooling straddles two different and distinctive educative strata in the English state education system. It is the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (sometimes referred to as EYFS2), and yet it is also the first year of formal Primary schooling. The EYFS is concerned with the education and care of very young children and it has its own distinct child-centred play-based pedagogy, in contrast to the more traditional, didactic National Curriculum.

### 5.2 From Dame schools to the EYFS

Early childhood education is not a recent phenomenon. Children as young as two or three years of age attended 'Dame' schools as long ago as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These schools, both rural and urban, were a common fee-paying child-care solution for poor, working mothers. Since there was no means of monitoring the quality of this service at this time, the standards and provision ranged from homely and kindly, "with some formal education and ... (some) instruction in the alphabet and reading or maybe unscrupulous and uncaring" (Whitbread, 1972, p. 7). A discussion introducing the influential proponents, pedagogues and pioneers and their contribution



to early childhood education will ensue further below. An overview of the political trajectory of this phenomenon serves to introduce this topic.

The epoch, further to the period of Dame Schools, saw a number of Education Consultative Committee report recommendations, stating that children between the ages of three and five years should be at home with their mothers (Acland, 1908; Hadow, 1933; Plowden, 1967). The status quo remained unchanged until near the end of the twentieth century. On the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1994 John Major, Prime Minister, spoke at the Conservative Party Conference, offering a commitment to provide pre-school education for all those parents who sought it for their four-year olds. School 'readiness' was a key theme:

Education for the under-five's can not only enrich the child's life at the time but can also prepare for the whole process of schooling (HMSO, 1994-1995, p. v.).

The term 'Foundation Stage' was first coined in the year 2000 by Nick Tate, Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. He described the Foundation Stage as a distinct period of education for children aged three years to the end of the Reception Year (QCA, 2000). The Education Act of 2002 extended the National Curriculum to include the Foundation Stage. Baroness Ashton reiterated this phrase in the foreword of the 'Foundation Stage Profile Handbook' (QCA, 2003). Two key publications, 'Birth to 3 matters' (DfES, 2002) and the Green paper 'Every Child Matters' (TSO, 2003) demonstrated the ensuing Labour Government's commitment to early childhood education and care. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was finally ratified under the Childcare Act (HMSO, 2006) and became the framework for learning, development and care for children aged from birth to five. From 2008, all providers of early years education were required to follow a single statutory framework setting out a "common set of principles, themes and commitments" (DfE, 2011, p. 4).

The Tickell review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), in 2011, recommended changes to the 2008 framework. As of 2012, the EYFS framework has focused on three prime areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development and four specific areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, as well as Expressive Arts and Design (including music). The Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) are a salient feature of the EYFS framework. They are central to all seven areas of learning and development and comprise: 'playing and exploring' i.e., engagement; 'active' learning i.e., motivation; and 'creating and thinking critically'. The EYFS is currently undergoing

another major revision, due to be implemented in September 2021 (or 2020 on a voluntary basis). This is being piloted, reported and prepared for further consultation at the time of writing (2019)<sup>7</sup>.

This introductory discourse serves to highlight three notions relating to early childhood education. Firstly, that the education of very young children is not a new phenomenon, yet it has only become a statutory requirement in the twenty-first century. Second, that the recommended age for early education in recent reports and legislation is steadily decreasing from five (QCA/DfEE, 2000), through to two years of age for disadvantaged two-year olds (DfE, 2011). Third, that concepts such as ‘school readiness’ and ‘outdoor’ learning (see below) are not new (QCA/DfEE, 2000; DfE, 2011; DfE, 2014; DfE, 2018). Indeed, a complete cycle has elapsed through an era in which mothers were being encouraged to stay at home to bring up their children, to the recent declaration from the government announcing “an increase in the funded hours for three and four year-olds where both parents are working, from as early as 2016” (Ofsted, 2015, p. 8).

### 5.3 Early childhood pedagogy

Teaching in the early years can also be described as ‘specialist’, in that the pedagogical strategies in the Foundation Stage differ from those of Primary schooling. It is important to note that the Reception Year of schooling crosses two camps, that is the final year of the Foundation Stage (sometimes referred to as EYFS2), and yet it is also the first year of primary schooling. Thus, the pedagogy associated with early childhood education has its own representative body of literature including a significant contribution to this area of research by Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden and Bells (2002). These authors offer a working definition for pedagogy:

The term Pedagogy is applied here to refer to the instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner, and it is also applied to include the provision of some aspects of the learning environment (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002, p. 10).

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<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1168146/dfe-confirms-timetable-for-revised-early-years-foundation-stage>

The pedagogical debate comparing and contrasting didactic and child-centred teaching approaches has raged since the early nineteenth century. Traditional forms of instructional teaching methods, with the associated emphases on rote learning and the three 'R's' (reading, writing and arithmetic) are characteristic of the didactic pedagogical stance. Although, Archer (1978) references an earlier understanding of these terms from the eighteenth century i.e., 'reading', 'reckoning' (mental arithmetic) and 'wroughting' (making). Whereas the liberal, child-centred, discovery and active learning methods of such authors as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), Johann Pestalozzi (1745-1827) and Jean Piaget (1896-1980) represent child-centred pedagogies. These liberal and novel educational practices were appropriated by Christian, social reformers and/or philanthropists of the time such as Robert Owen (1771-1858), who founded the first infant school for the children of his mill workers in New Lanark, Scotland, in 1816. Later, the McMillan sisters, Margaret (1860-1931) and Rachel (1859 -1917) created the first 'open air' nursery in Deptford, London in 1914 (Bristow, 2000; Whitbread, 1972; McMillan Legacy Group, 1999).

Susan Isaacs, with her background in philosophy, psychology and education, combined with her knowledge of child development, viewed the educational value of the nursery school as an extension of the home environment, with the additional benefits of social experiences and opportunities for companionship. Isaacs was instrumental in setting up an experimental nursery school, Malting House In 1924, where children aged between two and seven years were afforded the freedom to "follow their interests and inclinations" (Bristow, 2000, p. 69). A stimulating, rich and appropriately resourced learning environment for learning both indoors and outside in the garden to enable children direct sensory perception experiences to observe, handle and make things was key for Isaacs. Isaacs believed that children's play was a means for children to discover and experiment with the world around them. (Isaacs, 2013; Whitbread, 1972; Bristow, 2000).

The above-mentioned pedagogues have been influential in the development of current early childhood educational practices. Their contribution to the underpinning principles of early childhood education include the view that learning should be based on the children's interests and match their developmental stage (Rousseau) and that children should learn through experience (Pestalozzi). Froebel emphasised individualised sensory learning through play, whilst Piaget recognised the importance of children's

explorative play and advocated 'learning by discovery' (Hadow, 1933; Kendall, 1986; Rainbow & Cox, 2006; Manning, 2005; Stephen, 2010).

Two particular studies have made a significant contribution to the research, theory and practice of early childhood pedagogy, namely: (1) the 'Effective Provision of Pre-school Education' project (EPPE, 1999, 2003, 2004); and (2) 'Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years' (REPEY, 2002). The EPPE project (1997-2003, extended to 2014), initially investigated the effects of pre-school education and care on children's cognitive and social/behavioural development for children aged 3-7 years (Sylva et al., 1999; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003). A longitudinal study involving 3000 children engaged in a variety of pre-school education experiences from 141 settings (playgroups, local authority or voluntary day nurseries, private day nurseries, nursery schools and nursery classes, integrated care and education centres), as well as children with no pre-school experience in the Reception classes from six local authorities, in five regions of England. In addition to the quantitative data collected, qualitative data in the form of case studies of twelve effective pre-school centres was also gathered, using methods of documentary analysis, interviews and observations. The essential finding was that the "Pre-school experience, compared to none, enhances all-round development in children" (Sylva et al., 2004, p. ii).

REPEY, the associated study, was developed to provide explanations for the statistical findings of the EPPE project (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003). REPEY focused on fourteen Foundation Stage settings, adding two further Reception classes, as well as telephone interviews with 46 childminders from four regions in England. The case studies from REPEY in the final report (Sylva et al., 2004), identified six key areas that contribute to effective early childhood pedagogical practice. The four findings relevant to the current discourse, comprise: (1) the quality of adult-child verbal interactions; (2) the balanced initiation of activities; (3) knowledge and understanding of the curriculum; and (4) knowledge about how young children learn. These findings inform current pedagogical theory and practice. The notions of child-centred education, learning through play, the role of the adult, as well as the balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and their application to early music education form the basis of the ensuing discussion.

More recent early childhood research supports the views of the early pedagogues referenced above. Primarily that early learning and development should be child centred. Wood (2013) sums this point of view:

Children should be relatively free from adult intrusion and direction, enabling them exercise agency, self-regulation, ownership, and control, and to direct their own learning (Wood, 2013, p. 4).

‘In the moment planning’ (Ephgrave, 2018; Holmes et al., 2019), represents a contemporary approach to child-centred early years pedagogy. The emphasis lies with the teacher being led by the child, responding to their interests at that moment in time. Thus, the adult role is described to be one of observation and reflection. This process of ‘looking, listening and thinking’ implies making an assessment of children’s play and interests at that precise moment, which foregrounds a decision about how to proceed. This may involve an interaction or the adult may decide to move away, as the child is “deeply involved in their play, making superb progress ...the adult, cannot...add anything useful” (Ephgrave, 2018, p. 96). Ephgrave describes this reflective process as ‘planning’.

Agency is a key factor in the child-centred learning debate (Berger & Cooper, 2003; BERA, 2003; Chung & Walsh, 2000; Young, 2009; Niland, 2009; Koops, 2012, 2017; Tomlinson, 2015). Wood (2013) explains: “Within sociocultural theories, agency is manifested in the freedom and ability to change one’s circumstances, and therefore has transformative potential” (p. 7). One interpretation of agency is the power or control of the source and direction, in other words, ownership of one’s learning (Koops, 2017). Young (2009) also notes the relationship between children’s sense of agency and the enriched quality of their musical play. Associated with this view of children’s agency and ownership of learning is the notion of adult versus child world perspective. Sundin (1997) sums this point:

To me the inevitable focus on children’s abilities and skills from an adult-oriented perspective is not properly balanced by a respect for and interest in what children hear and do as they observe the world in which they find themselves (Sundin, 1997, p. 56).

This point of view also aligns with the notion of perhaps how children’s ‘musicking’ (Small, 1998) might be perceived. ‘Musicking’, as previously mentioned, refers to musical participation in its widest sense. This notion is also essential to the current study, to be pursued further, as all too often the perception of musicianship or

musicality is reduced to performance ideals. Young (1995) explains how listening to children's music making can be interpreted from two contrary perspectives. On the one hand, children's music making can be embraced and applauded, nurtured and treasured, in other words seen as competent (Dangel, 2010; Matthews & Rix, 2013). Whereas the alternative view is one of deficiency. Young suggests that as we are so inculcated by the Western European music tradition with its associated high art forms, structures and stylised conventions, that perhaps this bears influence on our judgements of children's music. Indeed, Young (1995) makes the association between performance, being essentially defined by the final outcome, rather than process:

the western european tradition will be concerned with the music as object, (practitioners) will adopt a listening role which is disengaged from its process of making (Young, 1995, p. 53).

'Process' can be described as the step by step learning journey, which can be recalled as a model that can be applied to future learning, whereas the term 'product' prioritises a preconceived outcome, an expected goal or required standard of achievement. Young contrasts the model of listening described above with that of ethnomusicologists who actively engage in the context of the music, immersing themselves, participating in the ritual, to gain a clearer understanding of the processes involved in its creation. Indeed, Young suggests that in the pedagogical context, the adult should adopt the role of a listening partner.

The interacting adult takes the cue from the spontaneous musical actions of the child and begins to weave them into meaningful musical dialogue (Young, 1995, p. 56).

Two further points to note on the subject of the nature of 'listening' in the context of attending aurally to the musical play of young children. First, Young (1995, 2003) advises that "listening is active, constructing and creative, in the sense that it makes another form of the music; the 'listened to' version" (Young, 1995, p. 51). Furthermore, Young suggests that listening is a "multi-sensorial and also multi-dimensional" activity (Young, 1995, p. 51), as the task of listening engages more than the aural capacities of attending to sound. This has significant implications for the practitioners facilitating, supporting and developing children's musical play, adding another dimension to the sustained shared thinking process.

## 5.4 Learning through play

A second priority for early childhood pedagogy is that children learn through play (Ginsburg, 2007; Niland, 2009; Berger & Cooper, 2003; Stephen, 2010; McInnes et al., 2011; Martlew et al., 2011). “Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children” (Ginsburg, 2007, p. 182). Article 31 of The United Nations Convention (1989) recognises the significance of play for children, proclaiming it to be a ‘right’ for every child. Indeed, the QCA/DfEE (2000) guidance deems that “Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge” (QCA, 2000, p. 25). The EYFS Review (DfE, 2011) also emphasises the importance of regular access to outdoor play environments:

... recent research which shows that outdoor experiences can promote social and emotional development, as well as healthy physical development, and can support the varied learning styles of different children (DfE, 2011, p. 23)

Furthermore, the Report on the Evidence for the EYFS Review (DfE, 2011) notes the increasingly popular innovation of the Nordic tradition of ‘forest schools’ being introduced into EYFS1 as well as EYFS2 settings, with associated training for practitioners. The underlying rationale combines first, the health benefits of outdoor learning, reminiscent of the open-air nursery initiative of the McMillan sisters a century earlier. Second, outdoor play environments afford children the opportunity to explore and take risks (DCELLS, 2008a).

Acknowledged as fundamental to early years learning and development, play can be characterised by a number of features. Play should (1) be planned and purposeful; (2) present challenging and worthwhile activities; (3) occur in stimulating, richly resourced learning indoor and outdoor environments; (4) develop from the children's own interests, and finally (5) be given sufficient time for children to plan, develop and work in depth. (BERA, 2003; Ginsburg, 2007; Maynard et al., 2013; Matthews & Rix, 2013).

Martlew, Stephen and Ellis (2011) coin the term ‘active learning’ to describe this play-based pedagogy, outlining children's engagement in playful learning as “active involvement, autonomy and the opportunity for choice” (p. 71). The authors go on to explain that children benefit from “collaborative or cooperative experiential learning set in a meaningful context” (p. 72). The phrase ‘meaningful context’ can be understood from different stances. On the one hand, the mantra of beginning from a child's set of

owned experiences and moving out to the novel ones could be the first view (QCA, 2000; DfE, 2011). An alternative interpretation might be bounding a learning concept, skill or aspect of knowledge in a frame of understanding with which the child can connect. The third meaning might reference the view that learning is concerned with making connections and the transfer of skills and ideas. It is perhaps for these reasons that much of early childhood education is organised into themes, topics, areas of experience, rather than separate subjects.

Furthermore, learning in the early years is encouraged to be presented as a holistic, integrated curricula (Bresler, 1995; de Vries, 2011; Bond, 2015). The resulting implications for musical play as well as musical learning and development are twofold. Firstly, music can play a subservient role to enhance and enrich the topic, yet not contribute to creative and cognitive musical development (Bresler, 1995; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Hash, 2010; de Vries, 2011). It is imperative that due consideration is given to the rationale for integration. This should ensure that the integrity of music learning and development is maintained within the bounds of collaborative learning. There is an argument to be made for the benefits of the integrated, holistic approach to learning in the early years (and perhaps beyond). However, it requires musical understanding and knowledge which leads to the second implication. This concerns the sequential planning of musical skills and concepts, which may not occur in practice, since a working understanding of musical knowledge is required, as well as time, commitment and the determination to track learning and development on an individual basis. Some understanding of musical concepts and an awareness of how to deploy this knowledge to enhance and enrich children`s musical learning experiences form the mainstay of this study, underpinning the research questions. For, as Bond (2015) comments in the context of her study of music in three Reggio Emilia inspired pre-schools in Wisconsin, America:

General classroom teachers ... would have benefited from knowledge of music development and strategies for enhancing music learning (Bond, 2015, p. 477).

This finding aligns with two from the REPEY Report referenced above, namely that qualified staff with good knowledge and understanding of both the curriculum, as well as how young children learn are significant factors for effective early childhood pedagogy. Indeed, the authors note that “the most effective pedagogy combine both ‘teaching’ and providing freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities” (Sylva et al., 2004, p. vi). An equal balance of child and adult initiated activities proved to be key



in effective settings. Sound curriculum knowledge and understanding of the different areas was considered to be of import, as well as child development and play based environments. The notion of a sound understanding of music pedagogy for encouraging learning and development is a key tenet of this study.

Veblen and Elliott (2000) offer contrasting views on the subject of integration. An advocate of interdisciplinary teaching - "integrating curricula makes sense when it is employed in a richly contextual way" (p. 4), Veblen favours collaborative ways of working with the added integrity stipulation "music is worthy of thorough, sequenced instruction on its own merits and for its own sake" (p. 5). Veblen references the Latin derivation of 'integrare', meaning, 'to make whole' to underpin his rationale that an interdisciplinary approach to learning predicates a holistic, broader world view, which often implies a child-centred focus. Conversely, on the subject of collaborative ways of working in the arts (the same principle can be applied across all subject disciplines), Elliott founds his argument on the premise that the individual art forms represent independent forms of "thinking and knowing" (Veblen & Elliott, 2000, p. 6). Indeed, Elliott cites Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983) proposing that music represents a single, discrete form of intelligence to justify his view that:

Music deserves to be considered as an autonomous intellectual realm.... Attempts to link specific components of musical cognitive thinking with those of other domains are essentially bogus (Veblen & Elliott, 2000, p. 7).

Noteworthy, is that Gardner (2008) sought to move away from a "one-dimensional view of how to assess people's minds" (p. 4). His vision was to depart from a `uniform` view of mind towards a `multifaceted` view, in other words a pluralistic understanding of intelligences. Gardner conceived his theory of multiple intelligences, measured against a set of criteria, to accord with his belief that "human cognitive competence is better described in terms of a set of abilities, talents, or mental skills" (p. 6). Indeed, Gardner also recommends that we acknowledge the import of recognising and nurturing "all of the varied human intelligences and all of the combinations of intelligences" (p. 24).

It can be seen that music can serve a myriad of purposes, both contributing to the holistic, integrated curricula, as well as the whole school experience. Bresler (1995) offers four descriptors for how music (and the arts) are integrated into school life. These comprise the `subservient, affective, social, co-equal-cognitive` styles (p. 33). The first descriptor, `subservient`, references the use of music as a tool or vehicle to

address other curricular learning objectives. The `affective` term refers to employing music to induce or change mood, build self-esteem, or for the purposes of creativity or self-expression. The `social` descriptor applies to the role of music within the school community such as assemblies and concerts. The focus for the `social` descriptor is on children being cast as `performers` to create a `product` (Wiggins, 2001). This musical service is particularly valued by school leaders due to its school promotional qualities. Finally, Bresler contends that the `coequal-cognitive` style requires subject specific content, knowledge and skills. A word of caution must be sounded, in that it would be helpful if these four descriptors for music in schools were acknowledged and more significantly that the first three styles do not become the sum of children`s musical experience. In other words, the extrinsic value of music should not be at the expense of the intrinsic.

The role of the adult in child-centred, playful learning and development is a key notion, central to pedagogical practice in the early years. Martlew et al., (2011) ascribe the practitioner`s role to facilitate and scaffold learning, contrasting it with the more formal, traditional, didactic and instructional perception of teaching. Stephen (2010) sums the range of skills early years practitioners employ to include “modelling, prompting exploration, questioning, scaffolding specific skill acquisition and nurturing a child`s disposition to learn” (p. 17). The two aforementioned research studies, (EPPE and REPEY) made a significant contribution to this thread concerning the role of the adult. The authors observed that greater progress was made when adults ‘modelled’ skills, engaged in open-ended questioning and “provided formative feedback to children during activities” (Sylva et al., 2004, p. i). More specifically, the findings report that children made most progress when the practice of ‘sustained shared thinking’ was observed. Sustained shared thinking is described as:

An episode in which two or more individuals “work together” in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend thinking (Sylva et al., 2004, p. 36).

Lev Vygotsky`s treatise on `Thinking and speech` (1934/1987) adds value to this thread. Vygotsky discusses the “maturation of the child`s higher mental functions” (p. 165), explaining that by cooperative means, the role of the teacher is to assist and participate in this developmental process. In other words, the teacher is charged with moving on the learning ahead of development.

Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or awakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 212).

Vygotsky adopts the term 'zone of proximal development' to denote the difference between "the child's actual level of developments and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 208). This notion of 'potential difference' is central, underpinning the research questions of the current study. Vygotsky also explores the role of play in the mental development of the child (1933/1966). Noting that play is a purposeful activity for a child, Vygotsky observes that the zone of proximal development occurs within play, since essentially children move forward in their development in the course of play.

The pedagogical practice of 'sustained shared thinking' can be further developed when considering the creative learning context. For, Chappell, Craft, Burnard and Cremin (2008) contribute the notion of 'possibility thinking' (PT) to the interactive discussions between child and early childhood practitioner. They contend that the 'question-posing' and 'question-responding' aspects of possibility thinking are central to children's creative learning. Question framing, degree and modality characterise the three dimensions of possibility thinking. These dimensions refer to the purpose, the range of possibility and type of activities that are inherent to question posing and responding. The authors sum that "Carefully framed leading questions provide the overarching intent for a classroom sequence of PT (Chappell et al., 2008, p. 283). Cremin, Burnard and Craft (2006) add that in order to facilitate child agency in the practice of possibility thinking, practitioners may find it helpful to step back, offering time and space for reflective cycles of question posing and responding.

The discussion on the role of the adult in early childhood pedagogy has identified the activities of modelling skills, scaffolding learning, sustained shared thinking, open-ended questioning, as well as formative feedback as some of the markers for successful play-oriented practice. However, implementing and sustaining a play-based pedagogy is not without its challenges (BERA, 2003). BERA, the British Educational Research Association Early Years Special Interest Group, reported that "play in practice is problematic" (p. 13). The first challenge in maintaining the recommended child-centred, developmentally appropriate pedagogy in the Reception Year, is that the emphasis of learning as a process, as discussed above, is at complete odds with the structured, goal-directed, outcomes or product orientation of the National Curriculum

guidelines which dominate the rest of the primary school curricula (Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2011). This tension between the developmentally appropriate, play based practices, characteristic of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the more formal, subject-oriented, outcomes-based curriculum framework of the primary school, is particularly evident and “a major point of concern” in the transition between Reception and Year One” (DfE, 2011, p. 28). Indeed, the 2011 Review goes on to report practitioner’s observations:

...that children can find the transitions challenging and that some children are especially vulnerable to the impact of stricter routines, less open environments, and more ‘formal’ pedagogy. Another facet of the challenge of transition is the reduced access to open and outdoor spaces which some children experience when entering school, and the particular difficulty this poses for children with more active and physical learning styles (DfE, 2011, p. 28).

The second challenge for the Reception teacher to maintain an appropriate curriculum is the perceived pressure to meet externally imposed attainment targets, as well as concerns over accountability and attainment (Goouch, 2008; Martlew, 2011; Maynard et al., 2013; Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016). Additional constraints for Reception teachers to navigate when planning child-centred, play oriented, developmentally appropriate curricula include sufficient space and/or time to accommodate and facilitate the learning and individual development of 30 children across each learning area. Further difficulties include parents’ expectations and the ‘pushdown’ effects from the primary curriculum (Wood, 2013; Martlew et al., 2011).

To sum, early childhood pedagogy is described as child-centred, that young children learn best through self-directed play. The role of the adult is to scaffold the learning and engage in the practice of sustained shared thinking. Using open-ended questioning techniques is key. However, challenges persist with regard to the successful implementation of such a pedagogy due to tensions arising from the demands of national policy curriculum frameworks, which tend to emphasise an outcomes-led curriculum biased toward the three ‘R’s’. Early childhood pedagogical Issues pertinent to musical learning and development reference the conflict between the learning priorities of process (journey) versus product (goal oriented) learning. The second issue pertains to the role music plays within the holistic, integrated curricula and whether playful musical activities are facilitated in a manner to contribute to individual music learning and development.

## 5.5 Musical play

A focus for this literature review is to compare and contrast the essence of spontaneous, individualised, child-initiated music making with the more traditional adult-led, group, music session. Marsh and Young (2006) define musical play as:

... everyday forms of musical activity ... that children initiate of their own accord and in which they may choose to play with others voluntarily... these activities are enjoyable intrinsically motivated and controlled by the players (Marsh & Young, 2006, p. 289).

A more conventional description of musical play might comprise the terms sound exploration, creative music or improvisation. Authors such as Addison (1991), Littleton (1998), Tarnowski (1999) and Niland, (2009) concur with the premise that free musical play is bound by notions of choice, control, pleasure, as well as being a voluntary, deeply engrossing and intrinsically motivational activity with an essential focus on “process rather than on product” (Addison, 1991, p. 207). Notions of engagement, agency and autonomy, integral to musical play can contribute to a state of ‘flow’ as previously mentioned in Chapter 4.3.3 (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Custodero, 2002, 2005; Stamou & Mouchtaroglou, 2012; Koops, 2017).

Tarnowski’s study (1999) of an experienced music teacher extending her pedagogical practice to work with children in prekindergarten, illustrates the potential challenge of changing mindset as well as practice. The teacher made a conscious, concerted effort to move from her traditional role as ‘director of operations’ to ‘observer’ of the children’s ‘musicking’ and by doing so become more aware of the richness of the children’s self-initiated musical play. A similar initiative was incorporated as an essential ingredient in a contemporary music project, ‘Tri-Music Together’ (2016 - 2018). Musicians and early childhood practitioners were brought together in collaboration, with a view to improving the music provision for children from birth to five years of age across EY settings in a London consortium. The musician’s initial task was to observe the young children’s spontaneous musical play. Pitt noted the import of this initiative in that it “enabled deeper understanding of child development” (Pitt, 2018, p. 6), which in turn impacted on practice.

The focus of this section of the literature review has been to reference the tension between process and product-oriented models of learning. Conflict between these two models of music pedagogy can also be evidenced in the EYFS guidance (QCA/DfEE,

2000) and Early Years Outcomes for creative arts (DfE, 2013). By definition, some of the music practice criteria such as `Join in favourite songs`; `Enjoy joining in with dancing and ring games`; `Tap out simple repeated rhythms` Begin to build a repertoire of songs; ` Imitate and create movement in response to music` (QCA/DfEE, 2000, p. 123) imply adult-led models of practice. Some acknowledgement of child agency may be presumed from the following criteria “Makes up rhythms” and “Explores and learns how sounds can be changed (DFE, 2013, p. 31), but equally could be evidenced in adult-led delivery of music. Young (2007) aptly sums this contradiction:

Music may be counted among the creative subjects, but conventional practice is often didactic, leaving little scope for children to contribute their own ideas (Young, 2007, p. 20).

An emerging body of literature pertaining to child-initiated musical play identifies six characteristics contributing to the development of the whole child. The first references its inherent multi-modality (Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006; Tomlinson, 2015; Ilari, 2016). Children are visually, aurally and kinaesthetically active. “Children blend movement with singing and if available, sounds with objects or instruments” (Marsh & Young, 2006, p. 290). An alternative perspective regarding kinaesthetic development concerns the acquisition and practice of gross and fine motor control skills, as well as hand/eye coordination through engaging in playful musical activities (Tarnowski, 1999). The improvisational nature of musical play presents the second defining characteristic. It is referenced by the creative processes with which the children engage, as they often toy with musical fragments, transforming them in some way (Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006; Alcock, 2008; Niland, 2009). Furthermore, children need time, uninterrupted, extended periods of time in which to engage and be able to extend spontaneous musical play episodes (Berger & Cooper, 2003).

Social and pro-social development by means of playful musical interactions with others provides the third characteristic (Williams et al., 2015). Cooperative play with another child facilitates the development of social skills such as patience, sharing, negotiating, turn-taking, self -advocacy as well as consideration of others before self (Tarnowski, 1999; Ginsburg, 2007; Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006). The fourth characteristic concerns the contribution musical play makes to the development of emotional well-being. Further to boosting feelings of self-confidence, musical play may allow children's sense of self-expression to develop, as well as notions of motivation, perseverance and determination. For, musical play may “offer positive experiences that

allow the child to build self-esteem while taking risks” (Tarnowski, 1999, p. 28). Communication (verbal and non-verbal) represents the fifth descriptor of musical play. As children share musical ideas, they begin to imitate or generate call and response and/or question and answer structures from their rhythmic or melodic patterns (Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006; Niland, 2009). Niland explains how the use of imagination, described as “the ability to think about things, events, people, or ideas that are not necessarily physically present” (p. 18) can be portrayed as a cognitive characteristic of play. Indeed, other, related cognitive skills presented through musical play include language and concept development, as well as problem solving capabilities (Tarnowski, 1999).

However, caution must be exercised. For it is very easy to be ensnared by the additional benefits of music and the “goals of music education to be nonmusical” (Lee, 2009, p. 358). As highlighted above, this is a prime concern for this research study. That is, the possibility that the instrumental functions of music take precedence, so that a planned curriculum for musical learning and development for its own sake is omitted by default. For, a pertinent finding from Tarnowski and Barrett’s “Survey of musical practices in Wisconsin Preschools in 1997. The authors reported that the music curriculum”:

... was frequently viewed as short-term planning rather than a planned series of sequential activities designed ... for the development ... general enrichment rather than ... as a planned curriculum of cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic skills with definable goals and outcomes (Tarnowski & Barrett, 1997, p. 6).

This finding could be considered quite dated, yet it could be argued that it is still relevant twenty years later. In the sense that musical activities occurring in the Reception classroom could be perceived to be transient, serving extrinsic goals, without a clear sense of purpose in the respect of musical learning and development.

Bresler adds to the discussion with her study of music “instruction” by non-specialist teachers in elementary schools. Bresler (1993) observed that music was rarely included as part of the regular curriculum during her three-year naturalistic study of three schools in the U.S.A. Further to 39 class teacher interviews and 23 lesson observations, Bresler found that teachers felt constrained by academic pressures as a result of the “back to basics” movement. Therefore, integrating songs to reinforce other curricular areas were seen as a means of slotting some music into the curriculum.

However, singing and listening activities seldom reflected musical learning as the teachers lacked musical understanding. As Bresler comments, “attention to musical parameters is typically not part of nonmusicians' thinking” (Bresler, 1993, p. 4).

An observation arising from this discussion alludes to the notion that in the course of twenty-five years 1993-2018 there may have been little change in early childhood music education, a theme warranting further exploration. To balance the discussion, it is necessary to explore the challenges and constraints a Reception teacher, or indeed a music teacher may encounter in their endeavour to provide opportunities for musical play, creative sound experiences, learning and development. There is evidence to suggest that possibilities for children to be able to choose musical play as an activity in a stimulating, resource rich environment may be limited (Morin, 2001; Berger & Cooper, 2003; Marsh & Young, 2006). It is noteworthy that the physical, sensory environment or `set` is considered to be the `third teacher` in the Italian Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (Hanna, 2014; Bond, 2015; You et al., 2015).

Issues of acceptable levels of music ‘noise’ with its associated disruption to other learning areas persist (Tarnowski, 1999; Addison, 1991). Conversely, the question may be raised as to whether suitable, stimulating, resource rich musical spaces are provided for children to focus on playful musical activity that are not subject to disturbance from other playful activities (Berger & Cooper, 2003; Marsh & Young, 2006). Classroom management issues including concern that the instruments and other resources may be at risk of damage may be a perceived constraint. Indeed, practitioners may be reluctant to relinquish control of, and at the same time perhaps feel ill at ease when not leading musical activities (Tarnowski, 1999). Also, playful music learning may be perceived as an adult led activity at ‘carpet’ time, as alluded to by Young above. Indeed, Morin (2001) comments on the findings of her Canadian research study investigating the early childhood trainee teacher’s beliefs with regard to useful skills, understandings, and future practices in music, offering the insight that:

... large-group, teacher directed instruction, rather than music play, is the most common instructional paradigm used in current music education practice (Morin, 2001, p. 25).

Berger and Cooper (2003) conducted a research study into children's solitary, as well as social, musical playful activity. The aim of the ten-week music education programme for preschool children and parents was to observe the musical behaviours of the children, in “free and structured musical play environments to discover how children



explore sound alone and with others” (p. 151). The focus was to discover the conditions necessary to either interrupt, modify or enhance spontaneous musical play. The findings identified the three themes of: (1) ‘unfinished’ play, perhaps through unwelcome interruptions or it may be inhibited in some way; (2) play can be ‘extinguished’ when it is obstructed by others, perhaps through invading proximal, physical space or by offering suggestions and/or corrections. Sometimes children can extinguish their own musical play, should they be experiencing difficulty and/or frustration; and (3) ‘enhanced’ play arises when adults value, encourage and are perhaps willing to engage in the playful musical activity, directed by the child. Finally, the authors noted that sufficient time and appropriate resources also enhanced the potential for successful child-initiated musical play. These findings are of significance for both Reception and music teachers engaged in facilitating spontaneous musical play.

To sum, six characteristic features of the nature of musical play have been described. Musical play is (1) multimodal; (2) it has improvisational qualities; (3) it helps develop generic social skills; (4) it has the potential to impact positively on emotional wellbeing; (5) it aids communication; and (6) it helps develop imagination. However, it must be reiterated that any instrumental functions of playful musical activities should not be at the expense of the intrinsic value of music, in other words music for its own sake. For as Bresler reports:

When music is present, it is delegated to the role of a vehicle for other ends-to illustrate a subject matter, to change pace, and to provide a background activity-rather than cherished for its intrinsic aesthetic/cognitive value (Bresler, 2003, p. 1).

Indeed, other classroom management constraints such as space, resources, noise potential and pedagogical approach may prevent access and opportunity for child-centred musical play. Finally, certain conditions need to be met to enhance rather than interrupt or extinguish musical play episodes.

## 5.6 Music and the Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS or ‘Early Years Foundation Stage` in England (2014, 2017, 2018, 2019) was first introduced under section 39 of the Childcare Act of 2006. The learning and development requirements for the age range birth to five years broadly comprise: (1) seven inter-connected areas of learning (educational programmes); (2) the Early

Learning Goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five; as well as (3) the assessment arrangements for measuring progress.

The three Prime learning areas of Communication and Language; Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development are considered to be “crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive” (DfE, 2014, p. 7). Music is subsumed within the Expressive arts and Design (EAD), one of the four ‘Specific’ areas “through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied” (p. 8). To broaden the discourse, a brief digression ensues to explore comparable international curricula written in English, selected for ease of linguistic understanding and interpretation.

It is interesting to compare and contrast both the international statutory curricular frameworks, as well as non-statutory guidance publications with those of the English EYFS. To reiterate, account must be taken of the aforementioned complexities arising from differing compulsory school starting ages, as well as the pedagogical orientation, in other words early years pedagogy or school curriculum. Table 5.1 Offers a summary overview illustrating the frameworks which focus on the early phase of education, and/or the school curriculum. Compulsory schools ages (CSA) are referenced, as well as the area of learning that incorporates music. A more detailed comparison of the international curricula for children aged four and five years can be found in Appendix 1. It is interesting to note that music is integrated within the communication strand of the holistic early childhood curriculum of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, rather than classified with the art subjects.

Table 5.2 serves to highlight the contrast between the level of prescription, support, expectations and expected outcomes of the various curricula. These range from the broad generic Early Learning Goals for Expressive Arts and Design in England, to increasing amounts of music specific detail and support for the practitioner in early childhood settings in Northern Ireland, to the detailed descriptions of content, examples of knowledge and skills, as well as levels of achievement in the school curriculum guidance in Australia and New Zealand. A further point of interest concerns the responsibility for legislating for the Kindergarten (K) to 12 curricula, lies with each state (or region in Canada), rather than the Federal Government of the United States of

America. The National Association for Music Education in America have devised National Standards for music from PreK to Level 8 (NAfME, 2014)<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 5.1:** Comparison of EYFS with international curricula

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Curricula & Phase of education	Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)	Curriculum for Excellence [school] (2010, 2019)	Early childhood Foundation Phase (2015)	Foundation [school] (2007)
Age range CSA	0-5 years 4 -5 years	4-6 years 4.5-5.5 years	3-7 years 5 years	4-6 years 4
Learning area	Expressive Arts & Design	Expressive Arts	Creative Arts	Arts
	Eire	Australia	New Zealand	
Curricula & Phase of education	The Early Childhood Curriculum (2009)	Belonging, Being & Becoming` ; The Early Years Learning Framework (2010) & The Australian Curriculum: (ACARA, 2016)	`Te Whāriki` : Early Childhood Curriculum (2017)	
Age range, CSA	0-6 years 4 or 5 years	0-5 years 4 or 5 years	3 5-6 years	
Learning area	Communication	Communication	Communication	

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/>

**Table 5.2:** International comparison of music specific guidance and support

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Guidance for teachers			8 discrete music skills	
Music Outcomes & Musical activities coverage	2 Early learning Goals, cross arts: * Exploring and using media and materials * Being imaginative	4 discrete music * Sing & play * To discover & play with voice, instruments, mus technology * Express & communicate ideas * Respond to & describe music	4 discrete music: * Collaboration; * Performing (matching musical elements); * Composing (timbre); * Making & Listening to music (elements)	Progress in learning: increasing ability to: * to combine & use mus elements * control vocal & instrumental sounds * awareness & understanding of mus elements
Additional guidance for music	Musical Development Matters (2018)	Appendix - Explanations and glossary		Learning through play in the early years: A resource book (n.d.)
	Eire	Australia	New Zealand	
Guidance for teachers		Learning; making; Responding in mus; Skills, techniques & processes; Content, knowledge & skills examples	Expressing feelings & ideas using a wide range of materials & modes	
Music Outcomes & Musical activities coverage	2 Early learning Goals: * share feelings, thoughts & ideas * listen to & respond to a variety of types of music, sing songs & make music	Achievement Standard	Skills... musical instruments... that can be used for expressing moods or feelings or representing information. Ability to be creative & expressive through ... making mus	
Additional guidance for music		Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (ELYF, 2010) & The Australian Curriculum: (ACARA, 2016)	The Arts in the New Zealand curriculum (2000) Aims; achievement objectives; examples & glossary	

The current statutory framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2014) references music as part of the Expressive Arts and Design area of learning (EAD), comprising two early learning goals: 'Exploring and using media and materials' and 'Being imaginative' (p. 12). The music elements of the two ELGs for Expressive Arts and Design include:

- (1) children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them for 'Exploring and using media and materials'; and
- (2) they represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through music (amongst other art forms) for 'Being

imaginative`. It must be noted that the Early Learning Goals (ELG) are currently under review and being piloted at the time of writing. Reducing the ELGs from two to one represents a significant change for EAD (DfE, 2018). Perhaps of greater concern, in the context of one of the fundamental principles of this study, is the `Performing` label for music with its associated emphases on product-oriented goals. The performing ELG states that children will “Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs” as well as “Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and ... move in time with music” (p. 14).

Non-statutory guidance in the form of the publication `Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage` (BAECE, 2012) is purposed to enable early childhood practitioners to “understand and support each individual child’s development pathway” (p 1). To this end, the `ages and stages` of development are set out, with accompanying descriptors: `To help engender positive relationships` and `To create an enabling environment`. The relevant `age and stage` for this study (EYSF2) is referenced as 48-60 months. Observations of a unique child at this `age and stage` for music include: (1) begins to build a repertoire of songs and dances; and (2) explores the different sounds of instruments. Also, practitioners should extend children’s experience and expand their imagination through their musical provision, provide imaginative stimuli by ensuring access to musical instruments and finally provide opportunities indoors and outdoors (p. 44 & 46). A more recent music-centred publication, in the form of `Musical Development Matters` (Burke, 2018), prepared in a similar format to the original document, is designed to support early childhood practitioners (see section 5.6 below).

The relevance of this section of the discourse to the current study concerns three areas of disconnect. First, clearly there is a mismatch between the expectations of children at the end of their Foundation stage/first year of schooling and the literature review of the musical competence of children of this age as described in Chapters 2 and 3. Second, a key focus of this research study is musical learning and development in the Reception Year. Neither the statutory framework nor original non-statutory guidance offer any support for Reception teachers in either framing or furthering their understanding of the nature of musical progression. Finally, it is clear from the broad comparative analysis of the international curricular frameworks, be it early childhood or school age that the English curricular frameworks offer little practical musical guidance for the Reception teacher.

To conclude the discussion on EYFS curriculum planning and guidance, it could be argued that the notion of musical learning and development may not be relevant for these very young children, particularly within an integrated framework with holistic learning goals, as evidenced in the curricula discussed above. However, it would be timely to recall two notions. First, that the statutory documentation references planning next steps to facilitate children`s progress, to meet their development and learning needs, across all seven inter-connected and equally important learning areas of the EYFS curriculum (DfES, 2007; DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2012; 2014, 2017). The second notion proposes, further to the substantial evidence regarding the musical competence of the young child discussed Chapters 2 and 3, that early years practitioners may have an obligation to offer children opportunities to sustain and develop this musical competence (Chapter 5). This leads to the fifth theme on the subject of planning for musical learning and development, that is a focus on assessment for learning in music.

## 5.7 Assessment and reporting

This section of the literature review outlines the development of the EYFS assessment framework, taking into account the impact of strategies and initiatives such as Assessment for Learning (Broadfoot et al., 2002) and Assessing Pupil Progress (DCSF, 2009). The purposes and forms of assessment are also considered, as well as a description of the nature of formative and summative assessment processes. This broad outline provides a contextual overview in advance of a brief exploration of national and international sociocultural approaches to early childhood assessment such as the co-constructed approaches of Reggio Emilia and the learning stories associated with the `Te Whāriki` early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2017). Finally, more recent, innovative approaches to recording and assessing musical learning and development will be introduced, such as the `Sounds of Intent` framework (Ockelford, 2019) and `Musical Development Matters` (Burke, 2018).

The current statutory assessment framework was foreshadowed by the `Desirable Outcomes` for children`s learning by the time they entered compulsory education after their fifth birthday (SCAA, 1996). The learning goals emphasised literacy, numeracy and the development of personal and social skills. Statutory assessment for 5-year-olds, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) was introduced in 2003, with

further revisions made in 2008 and 2012. Based entirely on teachers' observations, the profile was intended to provide a 'holistic picture' of the child throughout the Foundation Stage, culminating in producing data on the proportion of children reaching a 'good level of development' (GLD) at the end of the Reception Year (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017).

Aligning with the aims of the 'Assessment for Learning Strategy' (DCSF, 2008), the EYFS Statutory Framework (2012) referenced 'ongoing' or 'formative' assessment practices to be an "integral part of the learning and development process" (DfE, 2012, p. 10). Practitioner observations were intended to "shape learning experiences for each child" (DfE, 2012, p. 10). Assessment for Learning (AfL) was defined by the Assessment Reform Group in 2002 as:

... the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (Broadfoot et al., 2002, p. 2).

The four aims of AFL focused on the needs and drivers of the four main participant stakeholders. Namely: (1) the child's knowledge of their progress, as well as their understanding of how to improve; (2) the teacher's ability to make evidenced attainment judgements, combined with their understanding of 'the concepts and principles of progression', demonstrated in their planning going forward; (3) schools have 'structured and systematic assessment systems' in place, that track pupil progress by 'making regular, useful, manageable and accurate assessments'; and (4) parents are informed of pupil progress, as well as improvement strategies. (DCSF, 2008). The 'Assessing Pupils' Progress' initiative (2009) further defined the purposes of assessment to include notions such as learning and teaching 'effectiveness'; school performance 'accountability'; pupil progress information for parents and 'national standards' (DCSF, 2009). These notions imply normative forms of assessment.

Summative assessments are recorded at two key points during the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). A summary of a child's development in the Prime areas is reported for children aged between two and three years of age, as well as in the final term of the year in which the child turns five (DfE, 2012). At the end of the first compulsory, Reception Year of school, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed. "The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1" (DfE,

2012, p. 11). The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (STA, 2014) specifies the content of such a document:

A completed EYFS Profile consists of 20 items of information: the attainment of each child assessed in relation to the 17 ELG descriptors, together with a short narrative describing the child's three learning characteristics of effective learning (STA, 2014, p. 5).

The three key Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) comprise: playing and exploring; active learning; as well as creating and thinking critically. In addition, a three-point scaled judgement is recorded for each learning goal as to whether a child is `exceeding`, `meeting` or `emerging`, with regard to the expected levels of development (Roberts-Holmes, 2019).

The Expert Group on Assessment (HMSO, 2009) recommended that children's learning outcomes should be the focus of assessment practices and systems, noting that research evidence suggests that this is best achieved through combining summative and formative assessment practices. However, Basford and Bath (2014) highlight the juxtaposition of the positivist and interpretative paradigms resulting from the summative and formative assessment strategies. These authors suggest that the developmental approach based on the illusory ages and stage measurement norm of the `typical child`, by default, yields a deficit view of another child who doesn't conform to this set of predetermined early learning goals. In pursuit of the `readiness` agenda, this product oriented, developmental, positivistic model sits at one end of the assessment continuum. In contrast, the emphasis of the sociocultural, interpretative approach inherent to formative models of assessment is located in creating narrative accounts of a child's attitude and dispositions to learning, as framed by the Development Matters Guidance (2012). Basford and Bath suggest that:

... from a sociocultural perspective, assessment is embedded into learning as a cultural tool to help children build their ideas and capacities, rather than just to assess what has been learnt at one particular moment (Basford & Bath, 2014, p. 125).

The Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) outlined in the non-statutory guidance document `Development Matters` align with the focus on learning dispositions associated with the `Te Whāriki` curriculum in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2017; Carr & Claxton, 2002; Karlsdóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2010; Nyland & Acker, 2012; Klopper & Dachs, 2008; Hedges & Cooper, 2014). Similarly, the co-construction of children's learning and development with children, parents and carers as partners



resonates with one of the principles of the Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach to early childhood education in Italy (Gandini, 1993; Malaguzzi, 1994; Anon., 2001; Bond, 2015; Roberts-Holmes, 2017). Bond (2015) describes the emergent nature of the Reggio Emilia approach to learning, driven by the interests and inquiring minds of the children. The author notes that:

Children are encouraged to communicate their observations of the world through speech and symbolic representation ... often referred to as the *hundred languages*; it makes the unobservable (children's thoughts) observable through detailed drawings, clay work, collage, play, building, music, and movement ... work is documented and displayed to create an invitation for further exploration and to provide an opportunity for (children) to chart their own path of learning (Bond, 2015, p. 463, emphasis in original).

Children's individual thinking and learning is highly valued in the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, demonstrated by the commitment to making it 'visible' through the processes of observation and documentation "and then subjecting them to democratic deliberation about meaning" (Roberts-Holmes, 2017, p.159). This takes the form of "transcriptions of children's remarks and discussions, photographs of their activity, and representations of their thinking and learning using many media" (Gandini, 1993, p. 8). An interview with Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia approach (Anon, 2001) noted that 'atelieristas' or teachers, would meet weekly to review the documented notes, photographs and tape recordings in order "to hear the strongest currents of interest within the children's flow of ideas" (p. 46). These review meetings were considered important for both planning purposes, as well as offering a valuable opportunity to gain an insight into individual children's personalities. Noted emphases are concerned with notions of valuing children's contributions, as well as the concept of learning as a process. On the subject of observation from the child's perspective, Magaluzzi, the founder of Reggio Emilia remarks: "The child wants to be observed in action. She wants the teacher to see the process of her work, rather than the product ... The child wants to be observed, but she doesn't want to be judged" (Magaluzzi, 1994, p. 3).

The vision expressed in the unique bi-cultural framing of the 'Te Whāriki' early childhood curriculum of New Zealand is for all children to become "competent and confident learners, strong in their identity, language and culture" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 2). First published in 1996, the 'Te Whāriki' curriculum framework shares similar values and principles with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. As with Reggio Emilia, the 'Te Whāriki' early childhood curriculum places

strong emphases on both learning as a process, as well as on the co-construction of children's learning and development with children, parents and/or carers as partners. Referencing the notions of 'child as co-constructor' as well as each child's unique sociocultural context, Karlsdóttir and Garðarsdóttir (2010) note both the postmodernist and sociocultural theoretical perspectives underpinning this curricular approach to learning. These authors also provide a sociocultural definition for learning:

Learning is seen as the process of adopting knowledge, skills, understanding and social competence in co-construction with others by participating in a social context. (Karlsdóttir & Garðarsdóttir, 2010, p. 256).

The holistic dimension of the formative assessment process aims to make valued learning visible and take account of the whole child. At the same time, it serves to support curriculum planning and enhance learning, by making changes in the teaching and learning environment. The aim is "to find out about what children know and can do, what interests them, how they are progressing, what new learning opportunities are suggested, and where additional support may be required" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 63).

Observations of children's engagement in their learning are documented in portfolios of their unique learning journey, incorporating "annotated photographs, children's art, recordings or transcripts of oral language" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 63). Older children are encouraged to be active agents in this formative process, contributing artefacts, dictating their unique learning story, making assessments of their own progress, as well planning new challenges and setting further learning goals. The core elements of identifying learning, assessing progress and devising possible next steps are considered key to the formative assessment process. Indeed, it is suggested that narrative forms of assessment, such as learning stories, adopt a particular sequence of "noticing, recognising, responding, recording and revisiting valued learning" (p. 63).

Children's learning dispositions are mapped, further to their learning stories being reviewed and analysed for significance. Learning dispositions are considered essential in the pursuit of the commitment to lifelong learning. Requisite dispositions include courage and curiosity, trust and playfulness, perseverance, confidence and responsibility. Additional learning dispositions comprise reciprocity, creativity, imagination and resilience. A further dimension to learning dispositions is outlined:

Learning dispositions necessarily incorporate a 'ready, willing and able' element. Being 'ready' means having the inclination, being 'willing' means having sensitivity to time and place, and being 'able' means having the necessary knowledge and skills (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 23).

Returning full circle back to the Early Years Foundation Stage in England, an examination of both the current EYFSP Handbook (STA, 2015) as well as the Pilot EYFSP Handbook (DfE, 2018) suggests that parallels can be drawn across the three curricula. The EYFS in its present format recommends that in support of lifelong learning, the CoEL "represent processes rather than outcomes" (STA, 2015, p. 14). Similarly, the principles of effective formative assessment include notions of a holistic view of a child's learning and development. Finally, that the EYFSP should comprise accounts "from a range of perspectives including the child, their parents and other relevant adults" (p. 10).

However, it must be recognised that there are also contrasting summative and statutory assessment requirements that are implicit within the EYFS framework. This is illustrated by such emphases as measuring progress against expected levels, the 'readiness' agenda mentioned above, statutory teacher assessments, as well as providing data for national comparisons (STA, 2015). Soler and Miller (2003) suggest that the three curricula can be placed on a continuum ranging from the intrinsic, progressive, localised, learner-centred approach (e.g. Reggio Emilia), to the extrinsic, instrumental, centralised view of education which focuses on goal oriented frameworks to meet the needs of the society (e.g. EYFS). Whilst, in the middle, the 'Te Whāriki' curriculum aims to reconcile the sociocultural principles of a learner-centred approach to teaching, whilst fulfilling the goals of a National Curriculum. These authors sum the view that:

The Foundation Stage Curriculum in England is an example of a centralised, competency-oriented curriculum, as it establishes and specifies national educational goals and content in advance (Soler & Miller, 2003, p. 66).

In the respect of music, subsumed under the umbrella of the Expressive Arts and Design (EAD) area of learning, there are two early learning goals: ELG 16 (Exploring and using media and materials), as well as the more general ELG 17 (Being imaginative). More specifically "Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them" (STA, 2018, p. 32). 'Being imaginative' is a more general statement referencing all the creative art forms and describes the

application of learning from the first learning goal. However, schools currently piloting the new assessment profile will have noted a second major change to the ELG for EAD, with its emphasis on `Performing`: “Children at the expected level of development will: Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Perform songs ... with others, and – when appropriate – move in time with music” (DfE, 2018, p. 15). This product-oriented outcome is of concern, both in the context of the current discourse on the holistic active learning process and second for this research study, with its emphasis on musical competence across the full range of musical activities.

These concerns provide a segue into alternative assessment initiatives more specific to musical learning and development. Two frameworks highlighted here include the Sounds of Intent (Ockelford, 2019), and Musical Development Matters (Burke, 2018). The `Sounds of Intent in the Early Years` project (Sol-EY), designed to explore the musical development of children from birth to five years of age, evolved from the original `Sounds of Intent` (Sol) research founded in 2002<sup>9</sup>. This project focused on the musical development of children and young people with complex needs “whilst, at the same time, promoting their emotional, social, cognitive and physical wellbeing” (Welch & Ockelford, 2015, p. 21).

The Sol-EY provided a framework for assessing and recording young children’s musical development. This model, founded on the principle that musical development is a multi-dimensional process, is based on observational evidence that “children were seen listening and responding to sound; causing, creating and controlling sound; as well as making sounds through participation of others” (Voyajolu & Ockelford, 2016, p. 94). Thus, the framework was organised into the three domains of musical engagement, namely the `reactive`, `proactive` and `interactive` (Voyajolu & Ockelford, 2016). Children’s musical behaviours were mapped within these three domains, resulting in six levels of development ranging from the simplest musical responses (level one), “through to complex and relatively sophisticated aspects of musical performance” at level six (Welch & Ockelford, 2015, p. 23). The (Sol-EY) framework of musical development is visually presented as a set of concentric circles divided into three segments, one for each domain. Figure 5.3 illustrates the three domains of musical engagement and the levels of musical behaviours from level 2 (centre circle) to

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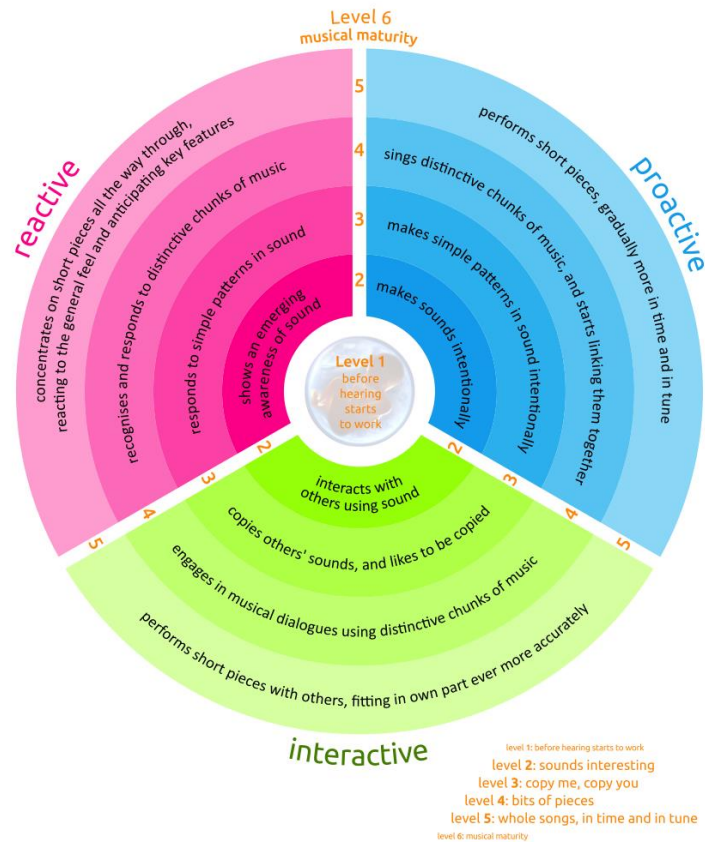
<sup>9</sup> Retrieved from [www.soundsofintent.org](http://www.soundsofintent.org)

level 5 (outer circle). Figure 5.4 adds the third layer of detailed descriptors for each of four elements (labelled A, B, C, and D) of the musical behaviours.

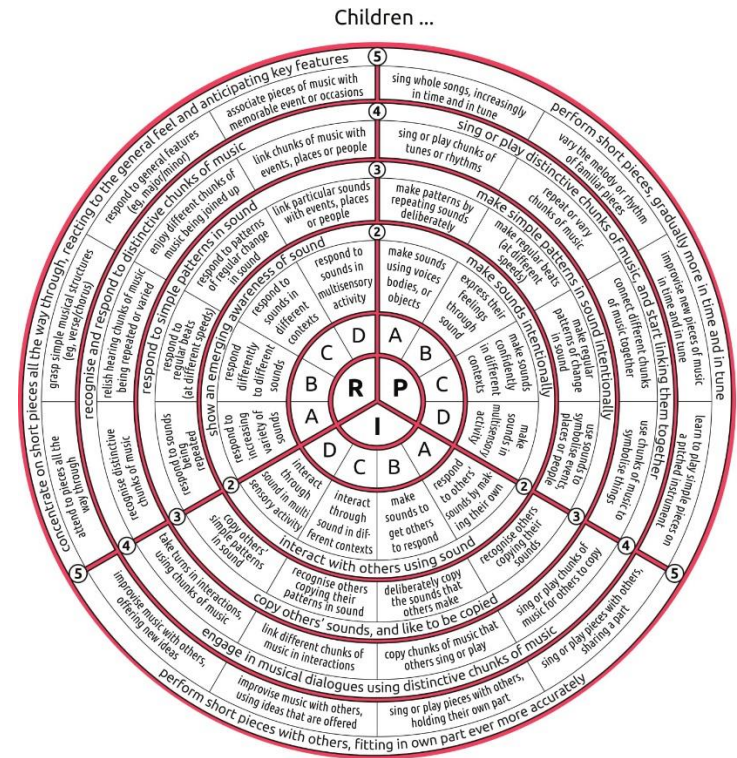
In recognition that children's musical development is dependent on sociocultural factors, it must be noted that this framework is not age-related (Welch & Ockelford, 2015; Voyajolu & Ockelford, 2016). Wu (2017) sums this notion:

... individual children have a unique music-developmental pathway and profile that depend on their personal learning and musical experience (Wu, 2017, p. 44).

# sounds of intent framework *in the early years*



**Figure 5.1** Sounds of Intent in the Early Years framework, illustrating the three domains of musical engagement and the 5 levels of musical behaviours (<http://eysoi.org>).



**Figure 5.2:** The Sol-EY framework with four elements (A, B, C, and D) within each matrix (Voyajolu and Ockelford, 2016).

A second, more recent, initiative outlining the potential musical learning and development of very young children can be found in the 'Musical Development Matters' (MDM) guidance document (Burke, 2018). Presented in the familiar format of the non-statutory guidance document Development Matters (2012):

[the] guidance has not been written to ensure that children are doing what they 'ought' to be doing, it has been written to offer examples and possibilities of what children often naturally do and how this can be recognised, valued and nurtured (Burke, 2018, p. 1).

Musical activities are grouped in to four, binary aspects of 'Hearing and Listening', 'Vocalising and Singing', 'Moving and Dancing', 'Exploring and Playing', with a focus on the EYFS principles of observing unique children, positive relationships and enabling environments. The purpose of the guidance is to support practitioners. The emphases of Musical Development Matters include exemplar of children's musical potential, as well as a "generalised not categoric picture of children's musical progression" (p. 4).

To sum this thread on the subject of assessing and documenting musical learning and development in early childhood, national and international frameworks have been compared and contrasted. These frameworks have been described in the context of national assessment strategies. Formative assessment practices, such as the process based, holistic, co-construction of children's learning journeys, have been compared and contrasted with statutory summative forms of assessment. The latter includes notions such as learning and teaching 'effectiveness', school performance 'accountability', pupil progress information for parents, 'readiness' and 'national standards'. In particular, pertinent to the themes of the current study, notions such as the musically 'competent' versus 'deficit' child, as well as 'process' versus 'outcomes-oriented' approaches to assessment have been discussed. The purpose of this thread has been to outline the field, in advance of the exploratory inquiry to learn how Reception teachers approach musical assessment, record keeping and reporting within their school context (Research question 2).

A further intent has been to highlight the disconnect between the expectations of the ELG's and the wealth of literature, reviewed above, describing the immense musical potential of infants and young children. Indeed, direct observation from my own experience has demonstrated the scope of musical achievement of very young children, providing a stark contrast between the stated level of progress children are expected to attain by the end of the Foundation Stage. Namely, by 60 months, a child

“begins to build a repertoire of songs and dances” and “explores the different sounds of instruments” (p. 44). The ELG is intended to represent the culmination of at least three years of early childhood musical learning, notwithstanding the familial, social and cultural contributions from the home and local community (Vygotskii & Cole, 1978; Pound & Harrison, 2003; Gluschkof, 2005; Stephen, 2010). To clarify, I am not interested in generating child musical performing protégées, rather, I shall argue that all children should have access and the opportunity to develop a breadth and depth of musical experiences to build on their inherent musical abilities. As aptly stated by Niland (2007):

During early childhood, music is not just about nurturing talent; it is about a holistic approach to exploring the world in musical ways (Niland, 2007, p. 18).

Three points for further discussion emerge from these observations. The first references the mismatch between children`s musical potential, if afforded appropriate opportunities to engage in music making experiences in early childhood, with the limited range of expectations of children`s achievements at the end of the EYFS. Second, the uneven musical playing field with which children begin school “with skills and knowledge below those expected” Ofsted (2009) is, in part, a reflection on national policy for music in the early years. Significantly, the current National Plan for Music Education (NPME), only provides financial support for children aged five to eighteen years with a view to implementing their vision:

... to enable children from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument; to make music with others; to learn to sing; and to have the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence (DCMS, 2011, p. 9).

The plan states that music teaching starts in the early years, commencing at age five. Perhaps the new NPME (2020-2030), currently in preparation may address this oversight. The implications from the omission of early childhood music making from the current plan are twofold: (1) that children have unequal access to musical opportunities in the early years; and (2) the musical competences babies are born with may not be nurtured and developed as perhaps they might. This latter implication leads directly to the third point coinciding with the generic observations recorded in the Ofsted evaluation report (2009) ‘Making more of music: an evaluation of music in schools 2005/08’. The main reported weakness music in primary schools was the lack of



progress. Indeed, the inspectors reported on “the extremes in the quality of provision” as well as the lack of understanding amongst teachers regarding “what ‘making musical progress’ looks like” (p. 5). This notion represents a primary concern for the current research study, namely that Reception teachers may not have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to support the musical development of the children in their care.

## 5.8 Summary

This chapter traced the emergence of early childhood education, noting that it’s not a recent phenomenon. ‘The Early Years Foundation Stage’ (EYFS), framework became a statutory requirement from 2008. Revised in 2012, it is currently undergoing another major revision which is being piloted at the time of writing (2018/2019).

The first (Reception) year of compulsory schooling, also known as EYFS2, straddles two distinctive phases of education, namely the final year of the Foundation Stage and the first year of Primary education. This dichotomy presents challenges for the Reception teacher, not least the contrasting emphases of learning as a ‘process’ (EYFS), with the ‘product’ oriented models of learning associated with the National Curriculum. The more liberal, child-centred, discovery and active learning methods concomitant with EYFS pedagogy, were compared and contrasted with the traditional forms of instructional, didactic teaching methods characteristic of the primary phase of schooling.

Sound curriculum knowledge and understanding of the different learning areas, as well as child development was considered to be of import in the training and development of Reception teachers. The diverse range of pedagogical skills early years practitioners require includes the practice of ‘sustained shared thinking’ (Sylva et al., 2004). The role of the teacher is to collaborate with the child during the purposeful activity of play, to help them move forward within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1987).

The benefits and challenges of interdisciplinary curricula were discussed, with particular reference to the implications for musical learning and development. For, music can play a subservient role to enhance and enrich a topic, whilst lacking due consideration for creative and cognitive musical learning (Ofsted, 2013). Whilst musical

play is noted to contribute to the holistic development of a child, the additional benefits must not be in place of its intrinsic worth.

Child-initiated `process` models of musical play were compared and contrasted with adult-led performance or `product` models of early childhood music making. Supportive factors to facilitate and enhance child-centred musical play include the provision of a stimulating, resource rich environment, combined with appropriate adult interactions. Whilst the challenges, perhaps leading to musical play being interrupted or extinguished (Berger & Cooper, 2003), comprise limited space, as well as the potential impact of noise.

The statutory framework, as well as the non-statutory guidance, of the English Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) were compared and contrasted with international curricula. Ideological and practical differences were found, including a wide variation in the detail of guidance for the teacher, as well as learning and development expectations for the child.

Music, situated within the Expressive Arts and Design area of learning (EAD), currently comprises two early learning goals (ELGs), although this looks likely to reduce to one ELG with an emphasis on `performing` in the forthcoming EYFS revision (DfE, 2018). Non-statutory guidance in the form of the publication `Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage` (BAECE, 2012), outlines the ages and stages of development for each learning area.

Formative and summative approaches to assessment in the EYFS were discussed, set within the context of national strategies such as Assessment for Learning (DCSF, 2008) and Assessing Pupil Progress (DCSF, 2009). Teacher observations, recording the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012), are intended to provide a `holistic picture` of child`s development. This approach was compared and contrasted with the socio-cultural processes of co-construction, informed by observation and multi-media documentation, associated with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education (Gandini, 1993). Similarly, parallels were drawn with the agency of the children in creating and documenting their unique learning stories, recording their learning dispositions and devising new

challenges in the `Te Whāriki` curriculum of New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Finally, two assessment initiatives, specific to musical learning and development were introduced (Sounds of Intent, 2015; and Musical Development Matters, Burke, 2018). Reflecting on the observations reported by Ofsted (2009) provides a segue to the final chapter of the literature review. These include: (1) the lack of pupil progress in music in primary schools; (2) the broadest range in quality of provision; and (3) the lack of understanding, skills and knowledge to support musical development. Chapter 6 explores issues such as teacher musical confidence, identity and views of self-efficacy with regard to teaching music in the Reception Year, as well as the concomitant structures for initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD).

## Chapter 6: Teacher confidence, training and professional development

### 6.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this literature review considers early childhood music education from the point of view of the Reception teacher, in respect of the notions of teacher confidence, initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD). A point of imbalance is to be noted, ahead of the international literature review, recalling the `WEIRD`, university participant populations referenced in Chapter 4.6. Namely, that many of the research studies exploring these themes tend to focus on the pre-service phase of primary, generalist teacher education (e.g., Mills, 1989; Gifford, 1993; Jeanneret, 1997; Hennessy, 2000; Hallam et al., 2009; Hash, 2010; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011; Biasutti, Hennessy & de Vugt-Jansen, 2015; Henley, 2017), rather than in-service teachers (Kelly, 1998; Holden & Button, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009; de Vries, 2011). Similarly, until very recently, research studies with an early childhood, in-service teachers focus were even more scarce. As noted in Chapter 1.3, a paucity of published research has been evinced for EYFS2, the Reception Year.

Feelings of low confidence, as well as perceptions of poor musical competence, permeate much of the international literature referenced above, sourced from nations such as Australia, Greece, Hong Kong, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Hennessy (2000) describes this sense of timidity and discomfort as the `red feeling`. Similarly, a common finding across a range of studies suggests that previous musical experience appears to be a determining factor on levels of confidence (Mills, 1989; Gifford, 1993a; Jeanneret, 1997; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008).

### 6.2 Teacher confidence and identity

MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2012) discuss the ubiquitous nature of music and the significant role it plays in our lives, suggesting that “music crucially influences our identity” (p. 2). These authors (2017) pursue this theme by introducing the dual concepts of `Identities in music` (IIM) and `Music in identities` (MII). The former, IIM, is

concerned “with those aspects of musical identity that are defined by established cultural roles and categories”, such as performer, composer, teacher or critic (Hargreaves et al., 2017, p. 3). The latter (MII), on the other hand, refers “to how we use music within our overall self-identities” (p. 3). Both concepts are to be pursued in the fieldwork, to help inform the discussion on teacher confidence to facilitate children’s musical learning and development in the Reception Year.

Whilst not directly relevant to the Foundation Stage, three studies with a research focus on secondary music specialist teachers (Ballantyne, 2005), as well as pre-service teachers (Hargreaves & Welch, 2003; Welch et al., 2010), offer Reception teachers a unique point of reference on the topic of IIM. The effectiveness of initial teacher education in Queensland, Australia, was the principal focus of Ballantyne’s Doctoral thesis, with questionnaires completed by 76 early career secondary teachers, followed by 15 in-depth interviews. One of the findings pertained to a continuum of self-labelling from ‘musician’, a ‘music teacher’ to ‘teacher’ and that this professional view of themselves was determined by “their perceived ability in the subject area” (Ballantyne, 2005, p. 214). Thus, one could posit that issues surrounding the notion of professional musical self-confidence and identity are not limited to general class teachers.

The findings of the ESRC-funded longitudinal ‘Teachers Identities in Music Education’ (TIME) Project (Hargreaves & Welch, 2003; Welch et al., 2010) further develop this thread exploring IIM. The TIME project sought to investigate how attitudes and identities of pre-service secondary school music teachers developed through the three phases of student and/or musician, postgraduate teacher education, to early career teachers. A mixed-methods study, quantitative data was collected in two stages. 150 students completed a musical careers questionnaire, exploring musical attitudes and aspects of self-concept and self-esteem. A subgroup (55) completed a further, modified questionnaire once in post. Semi-structured interviews and observation were the qualitative methods employed for the ensuing six case studies. Findings concluded “that the profession was still largely judged in terms of musical performance skills” (p. 25) and that “the identities of performer and teacher are not always seen as mutually supportive” (p. 24). Furthermore, a Western classical music background, perhaps with conservatoire experience, prevailed amongst potential school teaching candidates. In turn, this may result in a lack of knowledge, experience and understanding of popular

musical genres which, in consequence, continues to impact the “paradox of music education” (p. 27).

Two musically oriented early childhood settings provide the focus for two contemporary ethnographic early childhood studies researching practitioner perceptions of both musical confidence and competence. The first study set in a pre-school in Sweden, undertaken by Ehrlin and Wallerstedt (2014), evidenced a contradiction between the teachers’ actions in the teaching environment and the perceptions of their own musical competence. These music preschool teachers retained the mind-set that musical competence is bound by their own ability to sing and/or perform instrumentally, as opposed to their ability to engage in musical practices with children. Ehrlin and Wallerstedt recommend that:

... a development of the profession as such could be further legitimised if the participants changed also their way of verbally framing their practice, so that they could communicate their competence (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014, p. 1809).

Kulset and Halle (2019) also investigated the musical identity among eight adults working in a kindergarten with a high music profile in Norway. These authors report:

We were astonished to find that most of the staff members expressed a feeling of insufficiency when it comes to music making – even in a music kindergarten of this calibre. These informants are highly skilled in music making in the kindergarten (Kulset & Halle, 2019, n.p.).

These researchers described the dichotomy between the practitioners’ perceptions of a collective positive music identity “We are the kindergarten that do music” (n.p.) with “the hidden negative musical identity” (n.p.). This was expressed by sharing their “voice shame and cultural given views on musicality and their own (lack of) capacity to make music” (Kulset & Halle, 2019, n.p.). Schei and Schei (2017) describe ‘voice shame’:

Voice shame is the uncomfortable feeling of being heard as ridiculous, worthless or ‘not good enough’. Voice shame arises when a subject becomes aware of an observer’s attention and believes the evaluation to be negative. It causes intensive monitoring of one’s vocal expression and of others’ perception of oneself (Schei & Schei, 2017, p. 1).

To sum, these studies explored the personal reflections of specialist music practitioners across the early childhood and secondary phases of education. Reported findings demonstrate the conflict between teacher perceptions of both their identities in music and their musical competences. The latter continue to be judged in terms of previous musical experiences and performance skills. These findings present a contextual frame within which to set generalist teachers’ views of their musical identities and confidence.

Stunell (2010) suggests there is a correlation between teacher`s deficit in confidence, with perceived lack of competence and agency:

The teachers ... were all concerned that their practice with regard to music teaching in their classrooms was less skilled and less effective than their teaching of other subjects (Stunell, 2010, p. 97).

Should teachers view themselves as ill-prepared or lacking in competence to teach music, then they may question their self-efficacy, which will impact on their level of confidence, resulting in the self-fulfilling prophecy of underperformance in the classroom. "Thus, a cycle of low expectation may risk being perpetuated" (Hennessy, 2000, p. 184). This cycle has also been described as a "full circle of inadequacy" (Baldwin & Beauchamp, 2014, p. 197). Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of performing effectively to achieve set outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Steele, 2010). Garvis and Pendergast (2010) note that confidence alone is insufficient to validate self-efficacy, rather, that it also requires a level of competence in the particular field. Garrett (2019) suggests that teachers may engage in avoidance strategies, neglecting music whilst prioritising other curricular areas. This becomes counterproductive as opportunities to develop confidence and expertise through practical experience, in other words in pursuit of `mastery` are denied (Bandera, 1977).

Kulset and Halle (2019) note the decreasing visibility of music in early childhood teacher education, with a corresponding increasing deficit impact on kindergartens and pre-schools. Acknowledging both the extrinsic functions, as well as the intrinsic value of music for children in this early phase of education, these authors share their surprise: "one should think that music and singing songs would be an obvious part of everyday life in all kindergartens" (n.p.). Ehrlin and Wallerstedt (2014) echo this view by voicing their disbelief: "since the general perception may be that `music really lies at the heart` of this education phase" (p. 1800). However, evidence is emerging to support a case to the contrary, that music is becoming less visible in early childhood education (Ehrlin & Tivenius, 2018; Nardo, Custodero, Persellin, & Brink Fox, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009). Garrett (2019) voices concern, by suggesting that the "unmusical discourse is so prevalent" (p. 4) that the cycle is perpetuated between successive cohorts of teachers.

A recurring theme across the research literature on the subject of musical confidence centres on perceptions of musicality, musicianship and musical ability. These terms can be interpreted in various ways and therefore could be considered to be socially and/or culturally constructed, with associated implications (Blacking, 1971). For

instance, should the Western, classically trained musician, representative of the 'high art' ideal of music be upheld as the golden standard measure of musicianship, then it is perhaps less likely that the informally trained or self-taught instrumentalist or singer would consider him/herself as a musician. Equally common is the perception that being musical directly correlates to being able to play an instrument, read music and perhaps having a 'musical ear' (Ballantyne, 2005; Holden & Button, 2006; Hallam, 2006; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Koutsoupidou, 2010; de Vries, 2011; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014). Furthermore, the view may yet prevail that musical ability is bound by notions of talent, a gift, a special aptitude for the 'chosen few' (Blacking, 1971; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008).

Susan Hallam (2006) also writes on the subject of the various perceptions and understandings of these words, concluding that there is little consensus, nor "universally agreed definition of these terms" (p. 93). In pursuit of generating an understanding of what is meant by the term 'musical', Henley (2017) developed a more inclusive theoretical framework based on six perspectives, with active music making as the essential foundation. The perspectives were framed round the notions of: (1) being musically active; (2) engaging on a practical level, inclusive of the activities of listening and composing; (3) experiencing music on an aesthetic plane through the interdependent "fusion between practical, emotional and intellectual experience" (Henley, 2017, p. 475); (4) engaging in musical thinking, incorporating musical knowledge; (5) engaging the processes of creativity and imagination to contribute to the musical feeling; and (6) respecting valuing musical contributions and developing musical expertise. Ehrlin and Wallerstedt (2014) propose that "'Musicality' is a competence, or a set of competences, that can be developed, given the right opportunities" (p. 1801). Returning to the cultural theme, Honing et al., (2015) compare and contrast the terms musicality and music, suggesting that:

Musicality can be defined as a natural spontaneously developing trait based on and constrained by biology and cognition. Music, by contrast can be defined as a social and cultural construct based on that very musicality (Honing et al., 2015, p. 1).

A research study that explored pre-service teachers' levels of confidence also provided insight into an associated theme. Hallam et al., (2009) presented questionnaires to 341 students from four higher education institutions in England, to ascertain their level of confidence with regard to teaching music, further to their one-year primary



postgraduate teaching course. Only 47% expressed confidence to teach music. Of note is the finding that 55% of the students thought that music should be taught by specialist music teachers in primary schools. Qualitative responses to open questions in the survey gave further insight as to the reasons for this view. They believed that specialist music teachers demonstrated greater enthusiasm for the subject, thus offering the children a better education. They opined that enhanced training was required to enable the non-specialists to teach music effectively.

Thus, a parallel strand for discussion concerns the long-standing debate as to whether music in primary schools should be taught by music specialists or generalist class teachers. Mills (1989) expounds the advantages of generalist music teaching as threefold, based on the premise: "If music is not for all teachers why should children assume it is for all children?" (p. 126). First, that children are more likely to regard music as integral to their total curriculum, not something special or different. Second, as the class teachers know the children well, that the musical learning should be more relevant to their individual needs. Third, that generalist teaching should enable more opportunities for spontaneous musical learning to occur within the classroom as the occasion arises. Hallam et al., (2009) also note that the employment of specialist music teachers has a `knock-on` effect of de-skilling the class teacher. Mills does acknowledge that some specialist expertise in music was required within schools to meet the needs of these children who require a greater range of depth of musical learning than their class teachers could provide. However, unequivocally, Mills` view was that "the major responsibility for music should lie with the class teacher as it does for all other subjects" (Mills, 1989, p. 127). Hennessy supports this view:

... the teaching of music should never be the exclusive responsibility of one teacher - this is rare in other subjects and perpetuates the extra-specialism and elitism surrounding music (Hennessy, 2000, p. 184).

Mills` viewpoint could be challenged as to its validity in practice. Indeed, the Ofsted (2012) report `Music in schools: wider, still, and wider` states both the overall effectiveness, as well as the achievement in music was good or better in only 37% of the 90 primary schools visited in England between 2008 and 2011. Although it is not clear whether specialist or generalist teachers were observed, with such a low standard being reported and primary music specialists being in short supply (Hallam et al., 2009), it would be reasonable to assume that it is more likely that this is a reflection of the quality of music teaching in some non-specialist classrooms.

In contrast, de Vries (2015) reported on the music teaching of a small sample of five primary generalist classroom teachers, 56% of the staff, at a school in Victoria, Australia. Observations of music teaching and interviews with teachers and the Principal took place for one day a week for an academic term. De Vries noted that musical learning did not occur on an ad hoc basis, rather that it was a planned ongoing, sequential and developmental subject area of the curriculum. He observed singing as central to the music teaching but also witnessed much quality instrumental work, composition and effective use of music technology taking place too. He quoted Lisa, a prep department teacher:

For our children it's not about 'performing', it's about doing and enjoying music every day, it's a part of their lives (de Vries, 2015, p. 216).

Henley (2017) offers a second contrasting perspective on the subject of teacher confidence, further to data collected on entry to a one-year postgraduate programme for 253 primary generalist student teachers in London. Henley records that "incoming students have a musical profile different from those before them" (Henley, 2017, p. 481). Henley attributes this changing profile to the music education whole-class instrumental teaching initiative, introduced in primary schools in England further to the pilot in 2002. Current cohorts of post graduate students beginning their teacher training may have experienced this open access music making scheme. Findings note that just under half (48%) of the students were actively engaged in music making at the onset of the course, rising to 77.5%, taking into account previous active music making experiences. Two thirds (66.3%) of the students were taught to play an instrument or were 'taught music/an instrument/singing in the past'. It is not clear whether the teacher input was one to one, small group peripatetic lessons, taught by class teacher, or visiting/in-house specialist music teacher (through the PPA initiative), extra-curricular in or out of school club taught by musical adult/teacher, or indeed due to the widening opportunities scheme. Whilst signs of changing musical perceptions on the part of prospective primary teachers, based on their experiences of active music making are to be applauded, caution must be exercised. For, whilst it is wholly appropriate, to acknowledge and value previous musical learning experiences, concerns could be raised as to the possible reliance on these potentially disparate experiences as a foundation for the next generation of generalist teachers of music. Particularly if, as reported, the current PGCE provision for the foundation subjects such as music "are allocated just one 3-hour slot each" (Henley, 2017, p. 473).

Given the research evidence suggesting that a perceived lack of musical competence and agency impacts on teacher confidence, some researchers have tried to address this dilemma by exploring innovative intervention strategies. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) conducted a practical experiment, as part of a micro study, to discover whether a course of six keyboard-based `blues` activities would impact on the confidence levels of three non-music specialist trainee primary teachers. The sequence of practical activities, taught in an aural-oriented, asynchronous e-learning environment, were designed to enable a complete beginner to play an improvised 12-bar blues on electronic keyboard. Research instruments for the three case studies included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, as well as audio and videotape recordings. The hypothesis was founded on the belief that engagement with music at a practical level would improve confidence and create more objective perceptions of musicality. Whilst, not statistically significant, nor generalisable due to the small participant sample, findings from both the interviews and questionnaires demonstrated expressions of increased confidence on their part, with regard to both their personal musical abilities as well as teaching music in the classroom. Furthermore, the authors concluded that the “student’s own musicality should be explored through ‘encountering’ music rather than being instructed” (Seddon & Biasutti, 2008, p. 417). Limitations to note may include the following: (1) student self-selection may have added a motivational bias to the findings; and (2) the small scale (three participants) of the project may compromise further generalisation of the results.

Pursuing the theme of musical competence to teach music. Whilst high level musical performance skills are not required, it is interesting to note a key finding from the final EPPE report (Sylva et al., 2004). Previously referenced in Chapter 5.4, the report stated that early childhood “workers’ knowledge of the particular curriculum area that is being addressed is vital” (p. vi). As the current study pertains to the Reception Year at school, it would be reasonable to expect that teachers are qualified, as well as trained in both child development and developmentally appropriate music pedagogy. However, as the following research studies and project reports demonstrate, this may not always be the case. Bond (2015), illustrates these points in her qualitative study of music education in three Reggio-inspired pre-schools in America. Given that practitioners should have a sound knowledge of music development and an understanding of the role of the adult to enhance music play, Bond looked for evidence of scaffolding, as

well as challenging children to work within their zone of proximal development.

Findings were not encouraging:

... as one administrator alluded to in the course of her interview, a deeper understanding of what was happening musically across classrooms and why the musicking was developmentally appropriate did not exist (Bond, 2015, p. 477).

Of keen interest to the current thesis, these initial studies raise the possibility, that some Reception teachers may not have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary neither to recognise, nor develop, nor extend children's musical play.

Furthermore, Bresler's ethnographical study (1993) of the quality of non-specialist music teaching also serves to illustrate this point. Bresler observed that music was rarely included as part of the regular curriculum during her three-year naturalistic study of three schools in the U.S.A. Further to 39 class teacher interviews and 23 lesson observations, Bresler found that, constrained by academic pressures as a result of the 'back to basics' movement, integrating songs to reinforce other curricular areas was seen as a means of slotting some music into the curriculum. However, singing and listening activities seldom reflected musical learning as the teachers lacked musical understanding:

Indeed, attention to musical parameters is typically not part of nonmusicians' thinking and is not included within the curriculum (Bresler, 1993. p. 4).

Henley (2017) also references both the positive and deficit views of this debate, recommending an alternate approach that meets the criteria proposed by EPPE report (Sylva et al., 2004), recorded in the introduction to this section of the review. Namely, that it may be more constructive to address the question "what subject knowledge, confidence and expertise do non-specialist teachers have, and how can this be developed?" (Henley, 2017, p. 472).

The school placement experience presents another opportunity to help boost a teacher's level of musical competence, noted above as a prerequisite for encouraging beliefs of self-efficacy, with concomitant growth in confidence (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). Bandura (1977) identifies four elements, experienced in the classroom, which can positively impact on one's view of self-efficacy. These comprise 'mastery' (highlighted above), 'vicarious experience', 'verbal persuasion' and 'physiological states'. The school placement experience presents an ideal opportunity to encounter these four elements. A vicarious experience for instance, might occur further to

observing a music lesson modelled by a school mentor. For, a teacher may feel motivated and empowered to emulate the music lesson. Similarly, should this prove to be a successful teaching event, the practitioner may encounter positive reaffirming emotions, coinciding with Bandura's physiological states. Therefore, it might be fair to sum that Reception teachers need to have opportunities to access such experiences, so that these four elements can contribute to heightened perceptions of self-efficacy, resulting in improved competence and confidence to teach music.

However, research studies have also explored the teacher placement experience with mixed reports. Kim and Kemple (2011) presented the interview findings from a mixed methods study researching teachers' beliefs about the importance of music in early childhood education. Comprising 65 pre-service teachers from the south-eastern region of the United States, a finding recorded that the diverse teaching practices observed in the field were not conducive as effective learning opportunities, which further impacted on their levels of confidence. A contrasting finding was reported by Koutsoupidou (2010), who surveyed 118 students engaged in an undergraduate degree in preschool education (four to six-year olds) in Greece. The opportunity to observe music lessons in kindergarten classrooms was found to have the greatest impact on student confidence. The different samples making up the two groups of students at the beginning and end of Koutsipodou's longitudinal study may present concerns regarding validity. In addition, utilising one research instrument, the self-completion questionnaire, may also present a limiting factor on the findings.

Hennessy (2000) undertook a longitudinal study to evaluate university-based arts courses designed to prepare generalist primary teachers. Data in the form of semi-structured interviews were drawn from a small sample of twelve students, interviewed on successive occasions, before, during and after their school placements during their second and fourth years of study to collect data on their feelings and perceptions of their teaching experiences. Hennessy discovered that there was a "complex interaction between prior experience and beliefs, and the quality of school experience" (p. 183). Indeed, Hennessy noted the impact of in-school teaching experiences, which could either reinforce or challenge the students' views on their confidence and competence to teach music. She also found that some students had no, or limited opportunity to engage in music during their teaching placement. This was perhaps due to the assumption on the part of the class teacher that the student would not want to teach

music, or it was deemed less important than other core subjects. Alternatively, the opportunity was considered to be inaccessible since music was taught by an external specialist. In contrast, where students had positive teaching placement experiences and observations with constructive support, there was a `knock-on` impact in terms of their confidence levels and perceptions of their ability to teach music. Replicating the research in one or more alternative higher education institutions might have proven beneficial, in the context of generalising the findings from Hennessy's study. Similarly, one research instrument was applied and use of other data collection methods, such as observing the students in situ, may have provided an alternative body of data on the subject of student teacher' perceptions of the placement experience.

To sum, the research studies presented in this first section of the final literature review, for the most part, demonstrate that issues of low confidence of some non-specialist practitioners to teach music is an ongoing, universally pervasive theme across early childhood and primary education. It appears bound by their prior musical background and education, as well as the quality of their teacher education and school placement experiences (Hennessy, 2000; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011). Of note, is the observation that these feelings and preconceptions persist even within the specialist music pre-schools in Scandinavia (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014; Kulset & Halle, 2019). These findings add weight to Ehrlin and Wallerstedt's recommendation of reframing the practice of early childhood music education to one that promotes competence and confidence. The final part of this discourse, exploring teacher placement experiences in school, provides an appropriate segue to the next section discussing the contribution that initial teacher education makes to the ongoing themes of competence, confidence and self-efficacy of the Reception teacher to teach music.

### 6.3 Initial teacher education

In the context of Darling Hammond's view (2000) that there is a direct correlation between the length of teacher preparation and the quality of teaching, this section of the literature review serves to explore the impact of initial teacher education (ITE).

There are a number of pathways to qualify as an early childhood teacher in England<sup>10</sup>. These comprise school-based training, whilst employed, including programmes such as SCITT, School Direct and 'Assessment Only', in addition to the traditional undergraduate and post graduate training courses. Undergraduates typically enrol on a full-time three-or-four-year Early years initial teacher training (EYITT) course. Similarly, postgraduate students can engage in a university based one year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). In contrast, the employment-based route allows for training on the job. The School-centred initial teacher training course (SCITT or EYITT) consists of a one-year full time programme developed by a group of schools in partnership with the local authority and a higher education institution. More time is spent in school than on the traditional PGCE course, however the students still engage in academic study. Postgraduate students can also train with a group of schools or nurseries for one year on the School Direct (Early Years) graduate programme. Institutions recruit their trainees and work in partnership with an accredited teacher training provider. The essential difference here, is the expectation of employment on receipt of early years teacher status. Alternatively, graduates with several years of work experience can be paid as an unqualified teacher by the school, which in turn is subsidised by the Teaching Agency. The final teacher training pathway consists of the assessment routes. The 'Assessment Only' self-funded scheme aims to meet the needs of graduates with experience of working with children across the Foundation Stage (0 to 5 years), such as an early childhood teacher from overseas. Qualified teacher status (QTS) is awarded by an accredited and approved provider, on completion of an assessment comprising evidence of experience, skills and teaching. The 'Assessment-based' (AB) route is for those who have teaching experience, but not qualified teacher status and require minimal training to qualify.

Taking into account these varied pathways to qualify as an early childhood teacher, much of the research literature centres on the traditional undergraduate and postgraduate courses, emanating from three main sources: (1) music teacher education across the primary and secondary tiers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2004; Ballantyne, 2007; Legette, 2013; Conway, 2002); (2) generalist primary teacher training (Mills, 1989; Temmerman, 1997; Gifford 1993a; Holden & Button, 2006; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Hallam et al., 2009; Russell-Bowie, 2009; de Vries, 2011); and (3) early

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<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/explore-my-options/become-an-early-years-teacher>

childhood teacher preparation (Kelly, 1998; Scott Kassner, 1999; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011; Pitts, 2014; Gruenhagen, 2012; Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014).

Pertinent to this study, the issues to be discussed include time allocation on teacher training courses; student prior musical experience and knowledge; evaluation and feedback for initial teacher training; secure subject and pedagogical knowledge; as well as teacher well-being and attrition rates.

The professional standards (DfE, 2011) for qualified teacher status and requirements for initial teacher training in England (TDA, 2008) state that newly qualified teachers (NQT's) are required "to have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s)" (DfE, 2011, p. 11). A constraint to achieving this level of competence may be the limited time scheduled for musical training during initial teacher education courses (Hallam et al., 2009; Holden & Button, 2006; Hennessy, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Beauchamp, 2010; Henley, 2017). Hallam et al., disseminated a questionnaire to 341 postgraduate trainee primary school teachers, from four higher education institutions from various locations in England, with a view to investigating their perceptions of their preparation to teach music. Findings reported that 33% of the pre-service primary teachers indicated that they had spent no time being trained to teach music on their one-year postgraduate course, whilst 78% considered that the training received was insufficient. However, contrary findings were noted regarding the quality of their teacher education. In response to an open question, 219 (65%) of the 341 students were very positive on the subject of the quality of the training that they had received. As Hallam et al., note:

The findings suggest that many primary school teachers entering the teaching profession in England feel that the amount of training that they have received in relation to teaching music has been inadequate although the quality of that training is high (Hallam et al., 2009, p. 235).

This is a prime area of concern, particularly as research studies reference the correlation between the level of initial music education teacher training and effective music provision in schools (Temmerman, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2000; de Vries, 2011). De Vries (2011) administered a questionnaire to a captive audience of 112 first year practising, generalist primary teachers attending a non-music specific professional development day in Melbourne, Australia. A nested sample of 24 teachers were interviewed after the event. De Vries reported a positive correlation between the number of hours of music education teachers had experienced in the course of their ITE and the subsequent impact on their levels of confidence and competence, as well as their commitment to teach music. In this instance, 26% of the 112 first year teachers



who had received the greatest number of hours, between 20-40 hours of music input, noted a positive influence on their perceptions of musical self-efficacy, and their outlook on teaching music. Caution must be noted as to a potential limitation of this study. For, the convenience sample of respondents, taken from one training event, may not be considered generalisable to the cross section of the population of first year primary teachers.

Hennessy (2006) describes the double bind in which newly qualified teachers find themselves:

Music in primary training suffers a double disadvantage in the present scenario. The emphasis on the core subjects may result in music having as little as four hours on a taught programme in which to introduce students to teaching the subject, and access to very little or no music teaching when in school. This can exacerbate the view that teaching music is difficult and best left to "experts" (Hennessy, 2006, n. p<sup>11</sup>).

Notwithstanding the constraints on time and an awareness of the overcrowded curriculum within initial teacher education (ITE), particularly during the one year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course, Beauchamp (2010) approached the issue from another angle. He was curious to explore the contribution and impact of previous musical learning and knowledge. Beauchamp initiated a five-year research study of PGCE students to gauge their knowledge of the musical elements at beginning of their teacher training studies. The National Curriculum in England requires that pupils should be taught "how the combined musical elements of pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture and silence can be organised and used expressively within musical structures" (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p. 124). 483 students from one higher education institution were tasked with completing two short written tests (open-ended and multiple choice) to assess prior knowledge and understanding of the musical elements of pace, duration, pitch, silence, texture, timbre and dynamics. Findings demonstrated that despite their previous school music education through at least Key Stages 1 to the 3 of the National Curriculum, that student knowledge of the musical elements was judged to be incomplete. Furthermore, the results indicated that the greatest need for remediation in this respect was for those preparing to teach the three to seven age range. Limitations of this study include the lack of verbal interaction; delving to enrich and explore the subject in depth; as well as employing other means of divining hidden or forgotten knowledge; as well as asking for a practical demonstration.

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<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.tes.com/news/dont-forget-teachers>

However, this study also offers further support for the notion that students arrive at training institutions with wide-ranging levels of musical learning, experience, knowledge and understanding. This presents teacher trainers a considerable challenge to try to address this issue within the allocated time given to music within ITE programmes.

Teacher wellbeing provides another dimension to consider in this discourse. Similar findings were recorded by two reports surveying 2,446 newly qualified teachers (Hobson et al., 2007) and 889 trainee, student and newly qualified teachers (ATL, 2015). On the basis of their first-year experiences of teaching, almost a third of the survey respondents did not expect to be teaching four years later (Hobson et al., 2007). 73% had considered leaving the profession, mostly due to the heavy workload and work/life balance<sup>12</sup>. Clearly these data are a cause for concern.

Some researchers have investigated the high attrition or `burnout` rate, also referenced as `praxis shock` of early career music teachers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2004; Legette, 2013). Hypothesising that the quality of the teacher pre-service preparation might be a contributory factor, two surveys were commissioned. These comprised, first, an Australian study of 76 early career music teachers qualifying from three teacher training courses in Queensland (Ballantyne & Packer, 2004); and second, an American survey of 101 school music teachers from elementary, middle and high public schools, from varying urban to rural locations across the state of Georgia (Legette, 2013). The first set of findings led to the conclusion that a greater emphasis on both pedagogical content, knowledge and skills, as well as non-pedagogical professional knowledge and skills was required. Reported findings from the second study suggested that the pre-service courses needed more practical applications, such as `hands-on` teaching experiences (56% of respondents). Furthermore, challenging aspects of teaching were highlighted and found to include large class sizes, time constraints, physical demands on energy, copious quantities of paperwork, as well as classroom management issues. Of note, is the finding that 82% of the teachers considered `networking` with other music teachers to be very important with regard to professional development. Limitations to Legette`s study which may impact on representation, generalisability and validity comprise: (1) the low response rate (40%) from an online study implying self-

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<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.atl.org.uk/media-office/2015/New-teachers-already-demotivated-about-teaching-at-the-start-of-their-careers.asp>

selection; and (2) limitations arising from employing one research instrument with regard to the depth and richness of the data.

The relevance of these cross-phase studies to the current discussion lies in their contribution to the breadth and depth of context they offer within which to set the concerns of early childhood generalist teachers, who may feel ill-prepared to teach music in the classroom. These vignettes of specialist music teacher education do not inspire confidence. The findings appear to suggest that in some cases the teachers consider their training to be lacking. In 1997 Beauchamp raised concerns about the musical knowledge and understanding expected of practising teachers, suggesting that “their training did not equip them with the relevant theoretical and pedagogical background” (p. 69). Thirteen years later, Stunell (2010) also acknowledged that “Even where music training has been available, a positive experience for students has not been universal” (p. 83). Gifford provides further comment on this point:

The results provide little evidence that the pre-service training courses enhanced the confidence and competence of students to teach music (Gifford, 1993a, p. 37).

This observation is to be balanced with the quotation from the study recorded above (Hallam et al., 2009), which suggests that there may be insufficient ITE music input, however, the input is perceived to be of high quality.

To sum, the discussion thus far on the subject of initial teacher education (ITE) has been concerned with the quality and quantity of the input at the level of the tertiary training institution. Research studies have provided little reassurance that intending Reception teachers complete this training with the confidence and competence to facilitate musical learning and development in the classroom. The fieldwork experience or school placement element of teacher preparation has already been noted as a significant component (Hennessy, 2000; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2010) employs the term ‘practice-in practice’, with expert guidance as a model of teacher education. Legette (2013) describes the purpose of the school placement experience as one where students “spend extensive time in the field and simultaneously apply what they learn in class to actual teaching problems” (p. 16). One could posit the notion that Higher Education institutions may rely on the teacher placement experience to provide the music teaching element of the course. However, this opportunity or benefit seems to be arbitrary, rather than guaranteed, due to a variety of factors such as timetabling, resources, expert practitioners and so on (Hallam

et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Stunell, 2010). Indeed, Nutbrown (DfE, 2012), in an independent review of early education and childcare qualifications, raised the issue of the “long-term impact of poor quality placements” (DfE, 2012, p. 41).

Previously, it was suggested that the school fieldwork experience can provide a valuable opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop their confidence to teach music (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). With this in mind, the teaching placement music experiences of 84 third, and fourth year students from three university departments (2:1 music specialist: generalist teachers) were the focus of a Greek, qualitative research study (Kokkidou et al., 2014). Content analyses of the data sources identified emerging common themes, concepts and meanings. The data sources comprised student teacher`s teaching plans, self-evaluation diaries of their taught lessons, as well as written notes of their supervisory meetings on the subject of their fieldwork method. Inter-rater agreement led to a list of ten categories by the three researchers. Findings recorded that 84.5% of the pre-service teachers described their teaching practice experience as very positive. No statistically significant differences were reported between the music specialists and generalist teachers, implying sufficient methodological knowledge. Additional findings pertinent to the current study comprise student perception of the value of `real world` teaching placements, with its associated “unique opportunity for future teachers to build bridges between their theoretical knowledge and teaching expertise” (p. 500). Further recommendations included: (1) encouraging pre-service teachers to become reflective practitioners, in order to develop resilience; and (2) promoting critical thinking to resolve practical dilemmas in the classroom. These implications for practice segue into the next section, for critical reflection can be further developed as part of in-service teacher development.

## 6.4 Continuing professional development

Beauchamp (1997) remarks “it is important that practising teachers are not forgotten” (p. 69). This last theme responds to the fourth research question, concerning teacher continuing professional development (CPD). As Gruenhagen (2007) notes, there exists a significant body of research focusing on both pre-service generalist primary teachers and teaching music (Berke & Colwell, 2004; Gifford, 1993a; Hallam et al., 2009; Hash, 2010; Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006; Jeanneret, 1997; Mills, 1989; Russell-

Bowie, 2009), but until more recently there appears to be less extensive research reporting on these early childhood teachers once they graduate and begin teaching (Mackenzie & Clift, 2008; Yim & Ebbeck, 2011; Gruenhagen, 2007, 2012; Bond, 2015). A brief overview of the relevant literature aims to tease out the pertinent issues such as entitlement, differentiation, constraints, form, expert voice, reflective practice and learning communities.

Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to the process of growth in professional practice, both intellectual and functional, as a result of experiencing an effective agent of change (Evans, 2002; Yim & Ebbeck, 2011). This professional learning experience inspires advancement in knowledge, skills and attitudes, which impact positively on ways of 'knowing and thinking', as well as ways of 'doing' (Evans, 2002; Yim & Ebbeck, 2011; Oberhuemer, 2013). The ways of 'knowing and thinking', in other words the pervasive intellectual mode, result in greater analytical and critical, as well as reflective engagement on the part of the teacher. The functional mode of 'doing' refers to the pragmatic, immediate response of affecting physical change to improve immediate practice (Evans, 2002). Each mode can be considered motivational, contributing to improved feelings of wellbeing and confidence, thus strengthening both perceptions of professional identity and competence.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) consider the relationships between knowledge and practice, at the same time, offering a tri-partite model of professional development. First, 'knowledge for practice' references the use of formal knowledge and theory to aid teachers to improve their practice (theoretical study). Second, 'knowledge in practice' refers to reflecting on embedded practical classroom knowledge (learning from peers or expert teachers). Finally, the concept 'knowledge of practice' signifies the situated investigation of learning concerns in local sites, within the context of engagement in a broader community inquiry. Gruenhagen (2007) comments on the assumptions being made:

This perspective assumes that knowledge is socially constructed and that it draws upon the previous experience and prior knowledge of each participant (Gruenhagen, 2007, p. 161).

Reception teachers, as all early childhood practitioners, should be entitled to ongoing professional development (Ofsted, 2009; de Vries, 2011; DfE, 2011; Bond, 2015); and that this should apply to the creative arts area of learning including music (Hallam et al., 2009). However, evidence reported in the research literature suggests that this may

not always be the case. For, as Bond comments, further to an ethnographic enquiry as to the state of music education in three Reggio-inspired American preschools:

The majority of teachers did not have any music-related teacher training and felt that the few professional development opportunities provided about music were ineffective (Bond, 2015, p. 477).

Ofsted (2009) also reports that in primary schools “Helpful continuing professional development and challenge were rare ... Developments in music education had gone unnoticed or been disregarded” (p. 5). De Vries, in the course of his mixed methods study of 112 first year generalist teachers in Melbourne, Australia, discovered that none of the newly qualified teachers had been given the opportunity to experience music CPD. The school training priorities were committed to “literacy, numeracy, classroom management issues” (de Vries, 2011, p. 19). Similar findings were also documented in the Nutbrown Report, ‘Foundations for quality’ (DfE, 2012), which was tasked with reviewing early education and childcare qualifications. Nutbrown comments:

Access to, and the quality of CPD were continually raised by practitioners ... An overwhelming 72 per cent identified cost, both of the training and of cover while staff are away from the setting, as the main barrier to accessing CPD (DfE, 2012, p. 52).

Two of the interviewees from de Vries’ study (2011) highlighted further difficulties in locating appropriate music CPD that met their particular needs in terms of experience and level of expertise. Similarly, Nutbrown reports:

... over half of those responding (56 per cent) said the range of training and qualifications did not meet the needs of those currently in the workforce as well as new entrants (DfE, 2012, p. 52).

Thus, reported constraints and barriers to music in-service training opportunities for practising early childhood teachers include: (1) music not being an identified school CPD priority; (2) funding both the training and relief staff; and (3) availability of appropriate level of training to meet need. This last notion calls for a more varied diet of bespoke music training opportunities, at the same time suggesting that the ‘one size fits all’ approach is not helpful. Moving the discussion forward to consider potential forms of CPD.

The focus of Gruenhagen’s Doctoral thesis (2007) was to explore and understand collaborative conversations as a means of professional development. An instrumental case study, the participants comprised twelve early childhood music teachers, from ‘novice’ to ‘veteran’, employed by one large community music school in a metropolitan

area of America. Data, in the form of transcribed audio tapes, field notes, interviews; as well as artefacts, such as charts and handouts; were collected from eleven monthly meetings, two to three hours in length, over the course of one academic year. Open, axial, as well as selective coding of emerging patterns and themes were employed to generate categories, then subcategories, culminating in conceptually integrative categories. An ongoing teacher-centred, reflective community of workplace learners, whose aim was to foster “collegiality, collaborative inquiry, and critical discourse” (Gruenhagen, 2007, p. 6), provided the focus of her research. An interesting perspective results from the finding that teacher professional development experiences should be differentiated, “flexible and dynamic, continually evolving along with the learners and the context” (p. 177). Limitations of this study might reference the following biases: participant-observer; white middle class, self-selecting participants; all from one music specialist, rather than generalist, institution.

Traditional forms of CPD have also been a focus of research (Beauchamp, 1997; Yim & Ebbeck, 2011). Beauchamp (1997) explored the premise that a combination of initial teacher education and in-service education training experiences would contribute to greater teacher confidence. Forty primary school teachers in England and Wales were asked to complete a survey, with questions aimed at determining which aspects of music teaching required support, as well as which means of delivery were preferred and considered to be the most effective. Options included school or central based INSET; in-class support from either a specialist colleague; using audio or visual media (tape/video/radio); or finally, personal, independent training. Findings demonstrated that teachers found most forms of CPD useful, but not very useful and that help from a colleague in the classroom was the preferred method of support. Of note was the low rating for centrally based INSET as a useful medium of teacher training. Beauchamp also pondered on the impact of the gradual erosion of the local authority advisory services with regard to continuing opportunities for such in-service support. At the same time, Beauchamp drew attention to another potential issue concerning the expense of external agencies.

The “term ‘local authority’ refers to the tier of local government responsible for the provision of a range of municipal services, including aspects of education” (Purves, 2017, p. 13). Music advisers were appointed to improve morale during the Second World War. Retained during peacetime, they were organised along with peripatetic

teachers into local authority music services in the 1960s, “supported by a team of Her Majesty’s specialist music inspectors who provided training and liaised between policy makers and practitioners” (p. 79). Over the last three decades, further to the 1988 Education Bill, there has been a gradual erosion of the remit of the local authorities (LA) by successive Conservative and Labour governments<sup>13</sup>. The Education Reform Act of 1988 allowed schools to opt out of local authority control through the `Local Management of Schools` (LMS) legislation. The decentralisation of government services gave schools greater control over their budgets, at the same time reducing income for local authorities. In the 1990s, many local authority music adviser posts disappeared and LMS, in effect, undermined the strategic planning of instrumental services previously organised at a local level (Purves, 2017). The role of the music adviser had been noted to include “constantly raising aspirations and sharing best practice”<sup>14</sup>. The loss of a co-ordinated professional in-service team and source of musical expertise was the consequence.

Developing the theme of differentiated, flexible, dynamic and context-oriented teacher professional development experiences recommended by Gruenhagen (2007), Yim and Ebbeck (2011) provide an interesting perspective in contrast to Beauchamp’s people-centric finding noted above (1997). These researchers compared and contrasted the experiences, views and preferences of 24 teachers from four childcare centres in South Australia and 38 teachers from three centres in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The Music Development Scale (TMDS), a research instrument developed by Yim, measured teacher’s involvement. The authors listed a range of forms of professional development such as: attending music workshops/seminars/conferences; reading books/article/websites; watching videos/TV programmes; discussing music-related topics with colleagues or friends; practising music performance and finally, collecting teaching materials. Yim and Ebbeck found that ‘reading books/articles/websites’ was the preferred method in HKSAR and ‘watching videos/TV programs’ in South Australia. In other words, the practitioners opted for independent `self-centric` activities, not favouring interactions with colleagues, nor music specialists. This study provides a distinct contrast with other more `hands on`

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1987/dec/01/education-reform-bill-1>

<sup>14</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/jun/22/schools-local-education-authorities>



and `people-centric` models of CPD. Limitations of the study were perceived to include time constraints, limited sample, as well as the possibility of practitioners perhaps feeling reluctant to voice their opinions in the presence of faculty staff.

A brief digression to reflect further on the `performance` aspect, listed among the forms of professional development of the South Australia/HKSAR study. The notions of learning to play an instrument, read music or develop any other practical music making skills were referenced, yet not highlighted in the above study, but have been raised elsewhere in the literature. A common misconception is that “high levels of technical mastery (in playing an instrument and reading music)” are required to teach music (Biasutti et al., 2015, p. 144). Further to a survey of 159 early years and elementary school teachers in Washington D.C., Saunders and Baker (1991) noted that a number of in-service teachers believed that developing piano accompanying skills would be helpful in the classroom. The naivety of this notion was countered by experienced pianists who understood the time, commitment and practice involved to achieve the level required.

In pursuit of the thread of `people-centric` models of CPD, notions such as expert voice, networking, collaborative conversations and communities of practice are believed to be highly conducive strategies to effect teacher professional development (Krueger, 1999; Gruenhagen, 2007; Hallam et al., 2009; Gruenhagen, 2012; Lenger & Wave, 1998). Twenty years ago, Krueger (1999) posited two key facets of teacher professional development that align with more recent research findings. The first concerns the import of ownership and sense of empowerment. The second facet references the importance of collaborating with colleagues:

... teachers learn best when they can build their own knowledge and curriculum, share ideas with colleagues, and apply new learning in their practice (Krueger, 1999, p. 7).

Typical in-service opportunities, taking the form of ad hoc workshops which are planned and often delivered by an external party, have been described as disconnected, intellectually superficial and noncumulative, as well as lacking in consistency and coherence (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Gruenhagen, 2007). In contrast, Gruenhagen contends that professional development should be situated in practice; be an ongoing process; foster collegiality, collaborative inquiry, and critical discourse; as well as connected to improving student learning. In other words, located in the third

concept 'knowledge of practice', in the professional development model proposed by Cochran Smyth and Lytle (1999).

McCotter's qualitative research study (2001), exploring the theme of collaborative groups in the context of professional development, adds further insights to issues of collegial discussion and critical reflection. In particular, McCotter considers the notion of a 'safe' place for 'real' talk which involves creating a space where colleagues feel comfortable and supported. A space, where careful listening, exploration and sharing of ideas can take place. Also, McCotter describes reflective practice as an active process based on conscious thought:

Reflection, then, is the act of critical consciousness about one's actions and the contexts which surround them. It involves articulating and seeking feedback on those actions and actively looking for ways to continuously improve one's actions in moral ways (McCotter, 2001, p. 695).

McCotter sums that by combining notions of an open, outward facing attitude; an eagerness for mutual support and reciprocal learning; as well as relating theory and practice in experiential based contexts; thus, collaborative groups are empowered to enact change.

Reporting on the intrinsic case of a novice early childhood teacher, Katie, Gruenhagen (2012) developed her earlier research focus of collaborative conversations as a means of professional development and support. An intrinsic case study, recording Katie's "experiences, perceptions and evolving practice" (p. 29), Gruenhagen reports on the contribution of the collaborative conversations within the teacher learning community to Katie's ongoing professional development. Their value lay in the sharing of stories, offering guidance, as well as visionary new perspectives to help inform and develop Katie's practice. Gruenhagen concluded that adopting an inquiry stance, coupled with an "attitude of reflecting, examining, and questioning materials and processes" (Gruenhagen, 2012, p. 35).

Some studies highlight the notion of the specialist or 'expert voice' to facilitate musical professional development (Gruenhagen, 2007; Hallam et al., 2009). The essence of this role is to work in partnership, in other words, collaborate with early childhood teachers to meet their ongoing and evolving training needs (Gruenhagen, 2007; Hallam et al., 2009). Although, a network of colleagues, sharing concerns, ideas and problems,

with a view to moving learning and teaching forward, alongside the expert voice, is promulgated as the most effective context for this to take place. In other words, creating local discursive and reflective learning communities, empowering the educators to take ownership of their professional development as befitting their immediate, yet also their strategic needs (Kreuger, 1999; McCotter, 2001; Gruenhagen, 2007; Bond, 2015).

These learning communities have also been termed `communities of practice` which are described as groups “formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour” (Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1.). Wenger (1998) locates the communities of practice model within the social theory of learning, based on the assumption that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon and that active participation, discussion and reflection in a learning community can impact positive change in the valued community. Wenger (2006) describes three defining characteristics of such learning communities, namely the `domain`, the `community` and the `practice`. The `domain` refers to a community identity based on a shared interest and collective expertise. The `community` is characterised by the mutually supportive, active participation of the members. Finally, the `practice` references the “shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems” (p. 2). Hammerness et al., (2005), take this notion further by proposing a framework for teacher learning communities:

... teachers learn to teach in a community that enables them to develop a vision for their practice; a set of understandings about teaching, learning, and children; dispositions about how to use this knowledge; practices that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs; and tools that support their efforts (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 385).

Integral to the research design, the concept of a learning community has also been described as an essential component of three contemporary action research projects. The two-year Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Music project based in the East of England, funded by the children’s music charity Youth Music, responded to referrals of children, aged between 24 to 36 months, with communication difficulties. A community of practice evolved from the realisation of the “shared common ground”, which “developed from informal conversations between practitioners visiting the same nursery settings”<sup>15</sup>. Thus, two teams, the speech and language therapy specialists and

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<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.priorycentre.co.uk/children-and-families/SALTMusic/more-about-SALTMusic.php>

the early years' music practitioners, came together to work in partnership to "create a transformative pedagogy which marries speech and language development practice with music" (Pitt & Arculus, 2018, p. 7). The characteristics contributing to the success of this interdisciplinary pedagogical practice comprised: talk (open and in-depth communication); joint planning (mutual engagement); negotiating innovative ways of working; as well as co-delivery and reflective practice (establishing a self-critical community). The authors sum this practice:

The professional experiences and expertise of the individuals were diverse, with different understandings about working with children and families. The group of professionals united around the common aim of the project to coordinate their various views together to form a unified approach that characterises the emergent of SALTMusic pedagogy. Through joint endeavour, the community develops and creates resources which are their shared repertoire (Pitt & Arculus, 2018, p. 19).

Partington's ethnographic Doctoral study (2017) explores the dynamics of power and hierarchy in the relationships between three primary class teachers and herself, as visiting musician, with a view to ameliorating the teacher's attitudes and confidence to teach music. Partington proposes a model of 'dialogic interaction', drawing on the theories of social and cultural situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991); dialogical relationships (Freire, 1970); and 'the power of talk' (Alexander, 2006). Wenger (1998) suggests that the social theory of learning focuses on active participation in the community of practice and that identities are negotiated and constructed within and in relation to these communities. In contrast to the 'banking' concept of education, whereupon students are 'receive, file and store' information to 'memorize, retrieve and repeat' on request. Freire (1970) propounds the 'problem-posing' concept of education based on the notions of 'dialogue, critical reflection and communication'. Freire also notes the characteristics of love, humility, faith, trust and hope in his analysis of the human phenomenon of dialogue. Furthermore, Freire suggests that by engaging in reciprocal dialogical relations, students and educators participate in the joint creative process of growth and action, thus concluding that the "problem-posing method corresponds to the dialogical character of education" (n.p.). Partington (2017) adopts and develops Alexander's model of dialogic teaching, describing it as a collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative and a purposeful endeavour:

... the term 'dialogic teaching' seeks simultaneously to attend to a viable concept of teaching, to evidence about the nature and advancement of human learning, and to the conditions for education in a democracy, in which the values of individualism, community and collectivism stand in a complex and sometimes tense contrapuntal relationship (Alexander, 2004, p. 13).

By working as a group, listening to the viewpoints of others, sharing and building on ideas in a supportive and understanding, yet purposeful environment, the `power of talk` can be harnessed to facilitate change, empowering teachers to take ownership of their professional development. Partington identifies five additional commitments to further develop the model of dialogic interaction in the teacher/musician relationship. These comprise: (1) the honouring of respective expertise; (2) observing and respecting practice; (3) sharing vulnerabilities and experience; (4) being honest, truthful and open; and (5) allocating time for joint reflection (p. 246). Potential limitations of the single setting case study include the possibility that it might bar wider generalisability, as well as identifying potential participant observer/researcher bias.

The Tri-borough Early Years Music Consortium action research project, `Tri music together`, provides the third example of a contemporary community practice model of professional development (Pitt, 2018). Core funded by Youth Music, the principal aim of the project was to improve the music provision for children from 0-5 years old in early years` settings across three London boroughs. This was achieved by creating a learning community network based on the principles of collaboration and reflective practice. CPD was seen to be a key element, contributing to the ethos of the project. The pervasive learning culture was based on the notion of a mutual respect of member`s expertise, so that sharing occurred with integrity and honesty, within a safe, unconditional and non-judgmental learning environment. Furthermore, it was recognised that support and understanding at management level was essential and that reflective practice was required to create the CPD ethos, "that everyone is an expert and we learn together" (p. 6). Project outcomes included: (1) 148 musicians and 294 early years practitioners/teachers from 120 early years settings participated in the training sessions; (2) a strong community of collaborative learning was established; and (3) a robust network of consortium partners was created. Although, it was noted that 16:27 settings did not accept the offer to participate in a CPD day. The impact of this collaborative community of practice addressed a concern previously raised by the musicians, namely the sense of isolation and disconnect from the wider early childhood music community,

As exemplars of three contemporary CPD initiatives, these action research studies highlight notions of interactive, dialogical relationships, collaborative conversations, as well as critical, reflective practice, as essential to effective learning communities. This

final section of the review of literature has sought to explore opportunities and constraints for pre-service teachers preparing to teach music to their Reception class, as well as CPD experiences and practices, once in post.

## 6.5 Summary

The final chapter of this literature view responded to the recommendation that early years practitioners should be conversant with both developmentally appropriate knowledge of the different curriculum areas, as well as that of child development (Sylva et al., 2004). Thus, the three main themes of teacher confidence, initial training and further professional development were explored.

Teachers' musical identities, perceptions of confidence and beliefs of self-efficacy with regard to facilitating musical learning and development in the Reception classroom were found to be framed bound by teachers' preconceptions of what it is to be musical. The long-standing debate with regard to whether it is preferable for music to be taught by music specialists or generalist class teachers was presented. Further, complex dimensions such as curricular tensions and constraints were recorded as impacting on the quality, irregular input, or perhaps absence of musical learning and development (Bresler, 1993; Ofsted, 2012). Findings evincing a lack of teacher knowledge and understanding were contrasted with those few studies noting planned, ongoing, sequential and developmental musical learning (de Vries, 2014).

A review of the research reporting on initial teacher education included themes such as pathways into teaching, attrition, previous knowledge and placement experience. The professional standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) in England (TDA, 2008; DfE, 2011) recommend secure teacher subject knowledge. Yet, the literature researching ITE reports a positive correlation between the decreasing number of hours of music training with subsequent impact on teacher confidence, competence and commitment to teach music (de Vries, 2011). The fieldwork experience of teacher preparation was noted to be a significant component of the ITE process, yet the quality of the school placement was evinced to be to be arbitrary, rather than guaranteed (Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Stunell, 2010; DfE, 2012).

Professional development can be an effective agent of change impacting on both the intellectual ('knowing and thinking'), as well as the functional (ways of 'doing') processes of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Evans, 2002; Yim & Ebbeck, 2011; Oberhuemer, 2013). Despite an entitlement to ongoing professional development, the research literature suggested that this may not always be the case (Bond, 2015; Ofsted, 2009; DfE, 2012). Indeed, challenges were reported to include school training priorities committed to literacy, numeracy and classroom management issues; training costs: as well as the expenses incurred by employing relief teachers (de Vries, 2011; DfE, 2012). Furthermore, research studies indicated that music training opportunities were not necessarily appropriate, in terms of experience and level of expertise, nor meet the needs of the recipients. Indeed, ad hoc workshops, planned and delivered by an external party, were considered to be disconnected, intellectually superficial and noncumulative, as well as lacking in consistency and coherence (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Gruenhagen, 2007).

Alternative in-service strategies and innovative CPD initiatives were explored, including those evidenced by three contemporary action research projects. Teacher-centred, learning communities were found to encourage critical discourse, combining an inquiry stance with reflective practice. Colleagues worked in partnership to facilitate musical professional development. The importance of ownership and sense of empowerment is recorded in the research literature as key to CPD. A similar, noteworthy view is that professional development experiences should be differentiated, flexible and dynamic, evolving with the learners in their specific context (Gruenhagen, 2007).

This final chapter has sought to explore opportunities and challenges for intending teachers preparing to teach music to their Reception class, as well as continuing professional development experiences and practices, once in post. The pursuit of these topics has been in response to the long-evincing view that generalist teachers lack confidence and do not feel that they have the necessary competence, knowledge and understanding to facilitate musical learning and development in the Reception Year.

## Chapter 7: Theoretical framework

The main purpose of academic activity is to engage in the creation of knowledge. This is achieved by developing new ways for understanding the world (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, p. 258).

The accepted generic written framework for scaffolding such scholarly activity in the social sciences, 'top and tailed' by the introduction and conclusion chapters, comprises the following components: literature review, methodology with research questions, data presentation and analyses, and finally discussion. The inter-relationship of these elements is key to the overall coherence and validity of the research study, originating in the aim and research questions, resolving with the findings and further implications. Traditionally the literature review provides a synthesis of previous research. This process involves identifying, reviewing, analysing and critically assessing existing knowledge. The literature review has also been noted to "challenge or problematize existing approaches, theories and findings" (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, p. 258), as well as impact on "the choice of methodology, the research design, and the interpretation of results" (p. 260).

Petticrew and Roberts (2008) take this notion a step further, offering the view that theory and practice within much social research is conducted within established "schools of thought" (p. 20). These determine how social science is conducted and reported. These authors suggest that over time, "these [practices] become crystallized and resistant to challenge" (p. 20/21). With this in mind, they suggest that systematic reviewing, whilst still in early infancy offers "particular opportunities for wider use in relation to theory building and theory testing" (Petticrew & Roberts, p. 21).

On the basis of this premise, the theoretical framework for this study has been drawn from the relevant bodies of literature reviewed above. For as Paré et al., (2015) note, one purpose of the literature review, in pursuit of the advancement of knowledge, is that it can provide a theoretical foundation for a proposed study. These authors offer a typology, by identifying, defining and contrasting eight alternative types of literature review, comprising: narrative; descriptive; scoping; meta-analysis; qualitative; systematic; umbrella; theoretical; realist; and critical forms (p. 186). Paré et al., describe the aim of the explanation building role of theoretical reviews:

... a theoretical review draws on existing conceptual and empirical studies to provide a context for identifying, describing, and transforming into a higher order of theoretical



structure and various concepts, constructs or relationships. Their primary goal is to develop a conceptual framework or model with a set of research propositions or hypotheses (Paré et al., 2015, p. 188).

These authors pursue this thread by describing two scenarios for the occasions in which such a rationale might apply. Namely, in circumstances where a new theoretical proposition is required for a novel issue. The second scenario suggests a context whereupon extant bodies of research exist, yet “there is a lack of appropriate theories or current theories are inadequate in addressing [the] existing research problems” (Paré et al., 2015, p. 188). Thus, the value of this type of literature review lies in “identifying and highlighting knowledge gaps between what we know and what we need to know” (p. 188), or, as Webster and Watson (2002) suggest, “analyzing the past to prepare for the future” (p. viii). The relevance of this proposal to the current study references bridging the disconnect between understanding the concerns and challenges facing Reception teachers, finding ways to address and reconcile these with young children’s musical potential, with a view to facilitating their musical learning and development in their first year of schooling.

Paré et al., (2015) suggest that theoretical reviews often begin as a broad field of enquiry which become more refined, further to the collection and analysis of more evidence. Indeed, they also question the requirement for a full and complete census of all the extant literature. For, it has been argued that the intent of applying fixed, formulaic techniques and procedures in order to standardise qualitative inquiry, may in effect restrict intellectual curiosity and stifle imaginative, creative academic thought which is the antithesis of the purpose of academic research (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2003; MacLure, 2005; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Thus, this study is founded on notions of iterative, dialogical interaction, research imagination, as well as critical engagement on the part of the researcher, in the quest to advance academic scholarship, grounded in the concept of originality rather than replicability (MacLure, 2005).

A thorough and comprehensive literature search and review process, incorporating sound extraction and synthesis of the evidence is required to contribute to the rigour, reliability, relevance and validity of the study (Paré et al., 2015). Complete transparency with regard to the modes of conduct of these processes of literature review and synthesis will also contribute to increased validity.

To create a theoretical framework addressing the conflicting notions of rigid procedural guidelines, contrasted with the more open-ended conceptual thinking associated with creative and imaginative endeavours presents a challenge. In response, Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2014) proposed a hermeneutic framework as an underlying philosophy and methodology for conducting literature reviews. Hermes, an Olympian God from Greek mythology was known as the border or `boundary crosser. "As mortals became interested in interpretation of what other people said and did, often recorded in "texts," they borrowed Hermes' name for their work, calling it hermeneutics" (Barrett et al., 2011, p. 183).

The philosophy of hermeneutics is more commonly associated with the study and interpretation of sacred texts, with an emphasis on reconstructing their original intended meaning. However, as noted by Barrett et al. (2011), the more general theory of hermeneutics was proposed by Fredrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), an 18th-century German philosopher/theologian. Defined as the art of understanding (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 5), Schleiermacher theorises that hermeneutics focuses on the understanding, or rather "the non-understanding of discourse [that] ... The art of explication is therefore the art of putting oneself in possession of all the conditions of understanding" (p. 227). Schleiermacher discusses both the duality and mutuality of the contribution of language and thought in the sense that "the formal understanding of the whole, must precede the material understanding of the particular" (p. 232) and vice versa. Thus, evolved the concept of the hermeneutic circle, underpinned by the principle that understanding is an iterative process. The following passage, on the topic of synonyms, portrays a visual representation of the hermeneutic twin circles:

They resemble circles whose centres are less distant than the sum of their radii. The external part of their sphere therefore coincides, while the inner part remains separate (Schleiermacher, 1998, p. 248)

The principles of hermeneutic philosophy further evolved in the twentieth century with the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans Gadamer (1900-2002). Heidegger (1962) theorised a circle in that all interpretation is grounded in understanding the world, or `being-in-the-world`, which "has, ontologically, a circular structure" (p. 195). Second, that interpretation is "founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception" (p.191) and that "any interpretation which is to contribute

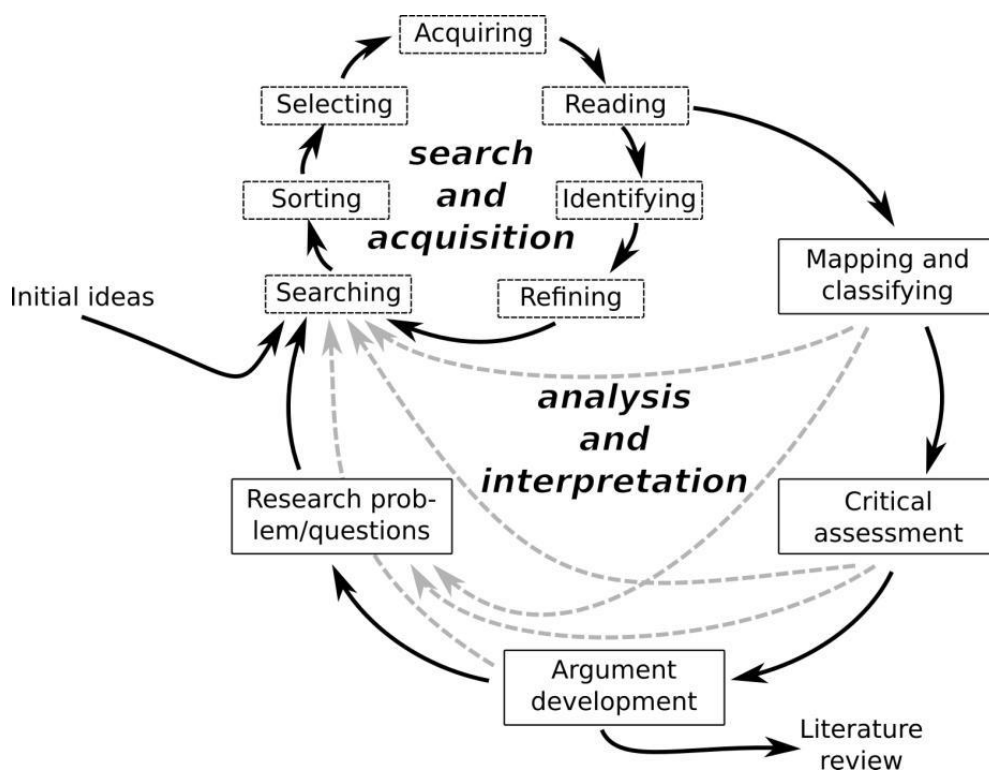
understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted” (p. 194). Third, Heidegger (1962) propounds that understanding offers meaning, implying that “something becomes intelligible” (p.193). Thus, Heidegger develops the concept of the hermeneutic circle, bound by the revolving notions of pre-understanding, interpretation and of ‘being’.

Gadamer’s book entitled ‘Truth and method’ (2004) also contributes to the evolving philosophy of hermeneutic theory, either by developing Heidegger’s principles or by adding new ones. The former includes the notions of ‘fore-projection’, ‘fore-conception’ and ‘fore-understanding’ which are constantly revised as meaning and understanding, emerging alongside deeper engagement with the text. Gadamer (2004) suggests first, that “this constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation” (p. 269). Second, Gadamer recommends the notion of ‘openness’, to put aside preconceptions and prejudices to allow the text ‘to talk’ (Gadamer, 2004). Similarly, the researcher needs to be aware of the potential impact of interpretive and personal biases. Gadamer introduces the concept of ‘horizon’, which he describes as “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (2004, p. 301). Moreover, that “understanding is a fusion of horizons” (Barrett et al., 2011, p. 189), as a result of “the dialogical encounter between reader and text” (Barrett et al., 2011, p. 189). Gadamer continues to explore the notion of ‘understanding’ offering alternative definitions. First, he suggests that it’s a psychological and empathic process involving self-realisation or self-knowledge (Gadamer, 2004). Second, Gadamer, references the more practical applications of technical knowledge, to know how to do something, contrasting it with theoretical forms. Moreover, Gadamer acknowledges the significance of socio-historical and cultural contexts in translation.

Key aspects of hermeneutic theory are summed. Understanding is an iterative, dialectical process founded on notions of pre-understanding the constituent parts, as well as the whole, within the breadth and diversity of the socio-historical and cultural context. The circle of understanding is continually revised, mutually co-produced, as well as extended to allow the fusion of horizons. The enriching potential of the hermeneutic circle can be realised but requires a degree of openness and reflection, as well as an awareness of preconception and personal bias in order to admit “the unknown, unexpected and strange” (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, p. 263).

The significance of this diversional exposition into the underpinning philosophical background of hermeneutic theory can be justified on the basis that it provides an appropriate and relevant theoretical framework for the current thesis. This particular theoretical position, emerging from the literature review, offers creative, imaginative engagement throughout the whole scholarly process, as discussed above, yet at the same time helps contribute to the rigour, reliability and validity of the study

Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2014) modified the hermeneutic twin circles concept for the express purpose of addressing the issue of improving understanding of the literature process (see Figure 7.1). An interpretive model drawn from hermeneutic philosophy was devised, with a view to bridging the divide between the literature providing evidence of young children`s innate musicality and the literature reporting teachers` lack of confidence with regard to teaching music in the early years. Indeed, the goal was to build a theoretical position, based on current literature sources, that can be interrogated by the data emerging from the fieldwork.



**Figure 7.1:** A hermeneutic framework for the literature review process consisting of two major hermeneutic circles. (Reproduced from “A hermeneutic approach for conducting literature reviews and literature searches”. Boell, S., & Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. (2014), *Communications of the Association for Information System*, 34(12), 257–286).

The twin hermeneutical circles concept adopted by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2014), was further developed into three inter-related circles for the purposes of both offering a visual representation, as well as a working model of the theoretical framework underpinning the current study (see Figure 7.4). The aim was to `bridge the disconnect between young children`s musical potential, with reports of teachers` lack of confidence with regard to teaching music in the Reception Year of school. The two (separated) semicircles situated in the centre of the framework represent the two sets of stakeholders involved in the research study, namely the children and Reception teachers. These two groups provided the foci for the initial literature searches.

The first inter-related circle, emanating from the central position of the stakeholders, combines the twin circles of `search and acquisition` with `analysis and interpretation` suggested by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2014). Thus, affording an outline of the literature review processes of searching, mapping and classifying, as well as critical assessment, which in turn leads to developing the proposed argument and research questions for the study. Moving outwards to the second inter-related circle, this round provides further interpretive descriptions to help inform and critically evaluate the first circle engaging in the search, acquisition, analysis and interpretation of the literature review process. These descriptors were drawn from the model framework devised by Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2014).

This in turn, foreshadows the third (outer) inter-related circle, illustrating the process of working through the dialectical, iterative aspects of the hermeneutical theory of understanding and interpretation, to result in a coherent presentation of the five stages of the framework. Thus, the "mapping and classifying" (p. 265) stage resulting from the literature search is illustrated by two `word clouds`, representing children and Reception teachers respectively (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3). These are refined into two lists for the `critical assessment` phase, before developing the argument, `problematizing` the issues. Finally, the theoretical aspects are translated into the research questions in preparation for empirical exploration (see Figure 7.4).

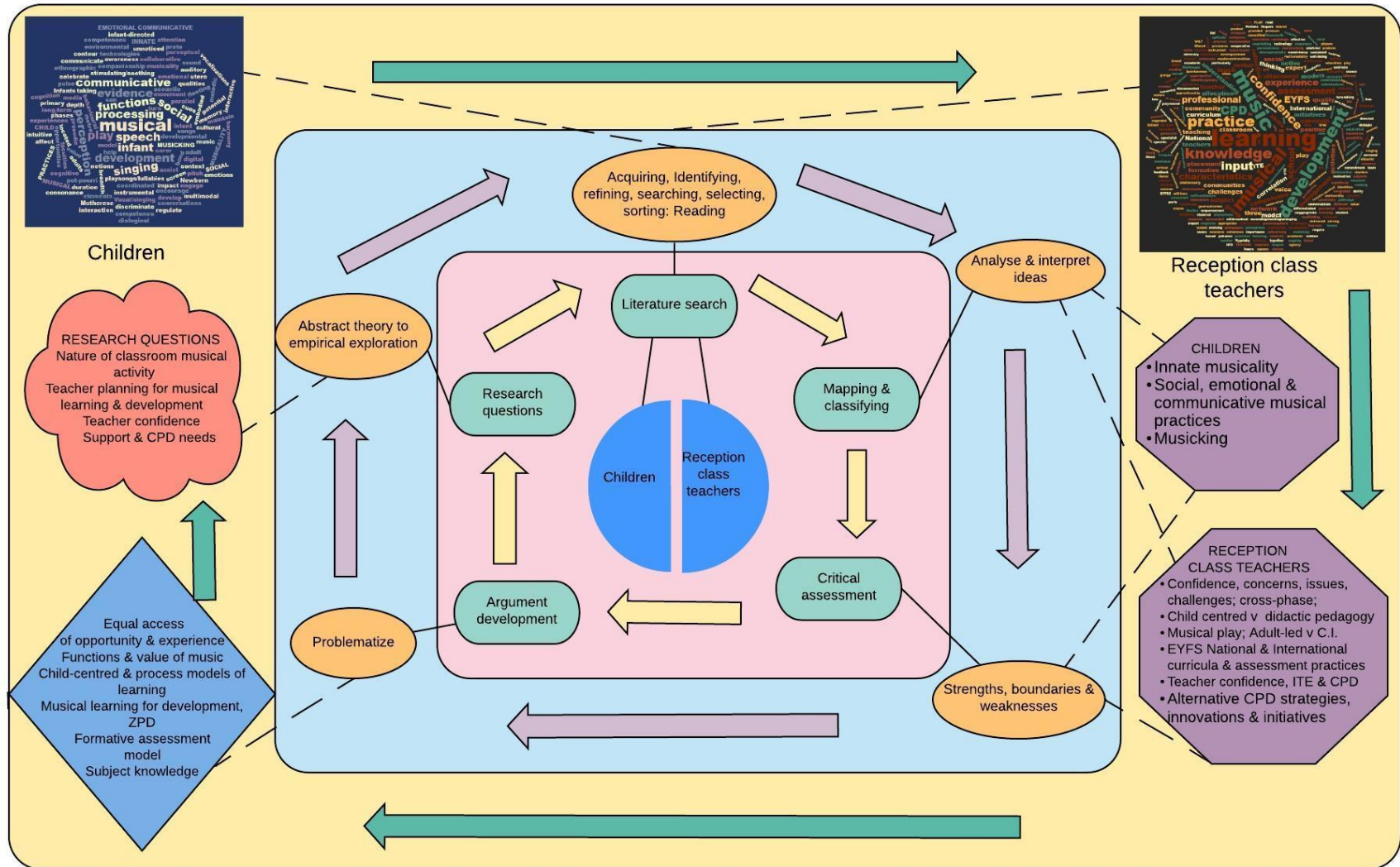


Figure 7.2: Mapping and classifying the bodies of literature about young children. The content is derived from themes emerging from Chapters 2 to 4 above. (Source: Personal collection).



Figure 7.3: Mapping and classifying the bodies of literature about teachers. The content is derived from themes emerging from Chapters 5 and 6 above. (Source: Personal collection).

Bridging the disconnect between young children`s musical potential with reports of teachers` lack of confidence with regard to teaching music in the Reception year of school.  
 Julie Digby August 2019



**Figure 7.4:** The hermeneutical theoretical framework of three inter-related circles (Adapted from Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Source personal collection).

To sum, an explication of the utility of this theoretical framework is proposed in advance of Chapter 8 which introduces the methodological perspective and instruments for this study. Figure 7.4 (above) provides an iterative, dialectical model, with an emergent theory, that is grounded in the reviewed bodies of literature. This theoretical model serves to create a coherent and structured framework with which to conduct this study, in pursuit of the ideals of both reliability and validity. The four research questions, nascent from this process, are interrogated by both the quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) strands of the fieldwork. Data analyses can also be cross-examined with reference to the model, with findings drawn and implications offered in anticipation of the potential to return full circle to reengage with the hermeneutical theory underpinning this process. To reiterate, the aim of the study is to bridge the disconnect, reported in the literature, between young children's innate musicality and the Reception teacher's lack of confidence and competence to facilitate children's musical learning. This involves developing a greater understanding of the issues, in order to identify the most appropriate means of supporting the teachers, with a view to encouraging a sustained amelioration of the musical engagement experience of both parties. The findings emerging from this process are also visually illustrated in a second complementary diagram (see Chapter 12).

The purpose of this thesis was to explore teacher confidence with regard to facilitating children's musical learning and development in the Reception Year at primary school. The underlying premise of this research study considered the view that children are innately musical and have an entitlement to a broad, balanced and rich music education. The first literature review reported the longstanding catalogue of research studies exploring foetal, neonatal and infant musicality. These collectively demonstrated support for the musical potential of young children in the respect of the early development of auditory, perceptual and cognitive musical abilities.

Chapter 3 explored the universal, attuned and intuitive parent/infant vocal interactions which characterise the companionable and communicative nature of the dialogical partnership between adult and child. Multi-modal in nature, these dyadic interactions were shown to contribute to the emotional, social and communicative development of young children. The literature suggested that both infant directed speech and infant directed song can serve to engage attention, maintain social interaction, communicate affect or regulate emotions, as well as contribute to language development. These



functional, extrinsic purposes of music were integral to the first research question, seeking to learn how music is integrated into the daily routine of the school Reception classroom.

The intrinsic value of music provided the focus for Chapter 4. The literature explored the concept of young children's 'musicking' in other words, young children's creative musical exploration through vocal and instrumental play. Children's musical engagement was described as multi-modal in nature, with a sense of purpose and direction, which may go unnoticed. Furthermore, it was thought that the inherent musical qualities of children's spontaneous musical expressions might not be valued, understood, nor recognised as they may differ from the adults' inculcated perceptions of the performance bias of the Western classical musical tradition. Thus, the Reception teachers in the current study were asked to reflect on their observations of child-initiated musical play across a range of activities, including music technology.

Chapter 5 reviewed the potential disconnect between the notion of musical competence, highlighted above, with the expectations of the statutory guidelines of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The specialist pedagogy associated with this age group was explored, identifying the implications for musical learning and development. These referenced the traditional adult-led models of performance-based musical delivery, contrasted with the child-centred approach to musical play and exploration. Distinctive aspects of the facilitative role of the adult in child-centred, playful learning were compared with the more formal, traditional, didactic and instructional perception of teaching. The review reported the 'push and pull' challenges, as well as the associated emphases of the 'process', (learning journey), versus 'product' (goal oriented) curriculum and assessment models. The fieldwork addresses the further exploration of these pedagogical themes in response to the second research question.

The final chapter of the literature review considered early childhood music education from the point of view of the Reception teacher, in respect of the notions of teacher confidence, initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD). Reporting that both a sound knowledge of child development as well as pedagogical knowledge are essential for early childhood teachers, these initial studies

raise the possibility, that some Reception teachers may not have the knowledge and understanding necessary, to recognise, develop, nor extend children's musical play. Similarly, the final review invites further enquiry as to the musical preparation offered in ITE programmes, including the teacher school placement experience, as well as further professional training in the respect of CPD opportunities. These issues are addressed by the third and fourth research questions, concerning teacher confidence, knowledge and understanding.

At this juncture it is pertinent to note a final point emerging from these last segments of the literature review. This concerns identifying potential influential characteristics pertinent to the Reception teachers participating in this research study. To this end, the decision was made to compare and contrast the impact of four variables, namely: (1) EYFS age specific training; (2) length of teaching experience on the basis of the training decade; (3) experience of EYFS age specific music CPD; and (4) self-identification as a musician.

## Chapter 8: Methodology

### 8.1 Introduction

The current study sought to gain an understanding of the teacher's confidence to facilitate and develop the musical learning of children in the Reception Year. It has also investigated the range and function of the musical activities taking place in the Reception class. The research questions comprised:

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

These research questions reflected both an exploratory nature, commonly associated with the qualitative methodology, and an investigative nature, associated with the quantitative methodology. Therefore, a mixed methods approach was adopted. A combination of the two epistemological positions has created a more coherent and complete research design, focusing on both breadth and depth of understanding. In turn, this has led to greater insights into the complexities of the research phenomenon. The bipartite methodology implied an alignment with both the interpretivist and positivist theoretical frameworks, thus combining inductive theory building, as well as deductive or theory testing protocols.

This study was underpinned by both a subjectivist ontology, focusing on people and meanings, and an objectivist ontology, dealing with observable facts, concomitant with the interpretivist and positivist perspectives respectively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Crotty, 1998; Biesta, 2015). By abductively considering the objective data alongside the subjective complex human dimension, the intention was to facilitate the data analyses and interpretation of findings from a multi-dimensional perspective. Each data set has questioned, informed and enhanced the other, thus working towards an iterative dialogue between the positivist and interpretive theoretical perspectives. The purpose of this analytical process of abductive inquiry was to aim for inference quality,

so that the study findings and conclusions may be transferable to other settings and contexts. Noting that knowledge can be both constructed from social world meanings and informed by empirical data, the epistemological goal was to generate warranted findings to explain the phenomenon, rather than categorical truths.

The research methods employed for the explanatory sequential research design in the current study took the form of an on-line questionnaire for the quantitative methods and a semi-structured interview for the qualitative methods. A progressive focus was adopted from the broad contextual frame set by the questionnaire data, toward the more in-depth and rich detail proffered by the interviews, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

## 8.2 Developing and implementing an online questionnaire

The survey instruments selected for this study comprised an online questionnaire for the quantitative strand and individual face to face semi-structured interviews for the qualitative strand of this mixed methods design. Questionnaires are considered to be highly structured and focused instruments, well attuned to situations in which researchers have a clear vision of what information they are seeking. Questionnaires typically collect three types of data from the respondent: (1) their attributes or characteristics; (2) their actions or behaviour; (3) their opinions, judgements, preferences, beliefs, and/or values (Gillham, 2007; Aldridge & Levine, 2001; Fink, 2013). The goal was to facilitate theoretical generalisation rather than empirical representation (Fink, 2013; Gillham, 2008). Questionnaires are usually cross sectional in design, intended to “give a `snapshot` of the situation at a particular point in time” (Robson, 2011, p. 238).

The principal strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaire method must be borne in mind. Advantages of the questionnaire as a research instrument include: (1) cost-and time-efficient, with wide geographic dissemination possible by hand, post or online (Denscombe, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011); (2) carefully prepared and refined questions with piloting resolves imprecise or ambiguous language; (3) collections of large, standardised volumes of data which can aid the generalisability of information (Robson 2011); (4) increased reliability due to the honesty stemming from participants` anonymity (Cohen et al., 2011). In the case of this research study, the online delivery

mechanism of the questionnaire was particularly advantageous in respect of the high number of questionnaires disseminated. Similarly, the volume of data collected served to provide a detailed overview of the musical activities taking place in the Respondents' classrooms. In sum, questionnaires provide a fairly easy and straightforward approach to discovering the "attitudes, values, beliefs and motives" of a large group of people (Robson, 2011, p. 241).

According to Robson (2011), the challenges of the questionnaire as a research tool include the dependence on the qualities of the respondents for example their "memory, knowledge, experience, motivation and personality" (p. 240). He also explains that the researcher cannot rely on the accuracy of the responses as "there is likely to be a high social desirability response bias - people responding in a way that shows them in a good light" (p. 240).

The third potential weakness concerns issues of miscomprehension and misinterpretation of the questions which may arise should there be a mismatch between the level of vocabulary and syntax of the questionnaire and the intended audience (Cohen et al., 2011). The fourth disadvantage of questionnaires can be the low response rate, which raises concerns as to the representativeness of the resulting sample (Cohen et al., 2011). Robson (2011) notes the lack of agreement between researchers as to acceptable response rates, whilst Gillham (2008) reports that 30% represents a typical return rate. Aldridge and Levine (2001) contribute further concerns such as those of artificiality and salience to the respondents. In other words, questionnaires are often formed by closed questions, manufactured by the researcher and that these may not represent the most relevant or pressing issues for the respondents. Furthermore, these authors suggest that questionnaires are not so concerned with the individuals, rather that the aim is to produce aggregate data and largely descriptive statistics.

In order to counter these challenges and to help develop the field of enquiry for the questionnaire, an initial face to face consultation (Appendices 2a and 2b) was undertaken with a convenience sample of 14 Reception teachers (Gillham, 2008). This sample was drawn from a network of colleagues. The rationale for adopting the convenience sampling strategy aligns with Robson's comment that "appropriate uses of convenience sampling include getting a feeling for the issues involved or initial piloting for proper sample survey" (Robson, 2011, p. 275).

This consultation served four purposes: (1) to ascertain the breadth and scope of the area of study; (2) to ensure the appropriate language and terminology was both being used and understood; (3) to gain a clear understanding of the nature of musical activity and approaches to learning in the Reception Year; as well as (4) concomitant issues and constraints, hopefully addressing some of the concerns raised above.

The draft questionnaire that emerged following the consultation comprised seven sections. The first section invited Reception teachers to take part, assuring confidentiality and anonymity. Withdrawal was possible by respondents declining to click the final submit button. The last section asked for volunteers to participate further in an interview. The penultimate section acknowledged participation, with thanks and asked for contact details should the teachers be interested in receiving a synthesis of the results on completion.

This composite draft was then trialled by both an academic researcher and an EYFS practitioner, in order to make the necessary stylistic or comprehension revisions. As Kelle (2006) cautions:

A meticulously constructed questionnaire may yield an invalid and highly misleading picture of the investigated domain if research subjects understand a question in a different way than the researchers (Kelle, 2006, p. 300).

The main substance of the final version of the questionnaire included questions intended to elicit an overview of musical events, resources, opportunities and observations in and out of the classroom. These questions were grouped into the following four sections: (1) The nature of musical learning; (2) Planning for musical learning and development; (3) Teacher confidence, training, professional development, musical identity; and finally (4) Demographic context.

A variety of questioning formats was used to maintain the respondent's interest (Gillham, 2008). These comprised: dichotomous choice (yes/no); closed questions, such as multiple choice, with fixed answer responses; five-point Likert scaled type questions, with a choice of responses e.g., all/most/some of the time/rarely/not at all; demographic questions of fact; as well as more open-ended questions such as those requesting examples or further detail.

Scaled question responses, such as the five-point Likert, required respondents to choose a level of agreement (Munn & Drever, 1999). Gillham (2007) noted a potential concern that the Likert scaled selections might reflect a positive response bias on the part of the respondents. The rationale for selecting five, rather than seven-point scales for the Likert response questions was based on the perception that too much choice both dilutes the response, as well as the notion of redundancy of options, in that “people don’t often use the complete scale” (Gillham, 2007, p. 32). Cohen et al., (2011) add a final note on the subject of the strengths and weaknesses of setting fixed or alternative responses. The coding benefits encourage greater reliability, however, the potential to frustrate respondents should they not be able to find their appropriate personal response could render the questioning superficial and perhaps irrelevant.

A greater proportion of closed questions with predetermined answers, rather than more open-ended forms of questioning, were included in the questionnaire. The uniform data provided from closed questions were considered to be efficient, reliable and easy to use, with the added benefit of being straightforward to code as the answers were predetermined (Fink, 2013; Gillham, 2008; 2007).

Open-ended questions asking for a short, specified response, as well as those serving to elicit longer, more descriptive answers were also incorporated within the questionnaire. The two questions requiring long text answers were included to gain personal views, to identify substantive statements for coding purposes, as well as to offer a source of quotations (Gillham, 2007). The benefit of this form of questioning is that it affords deeper insight into the issues, however that is balanced by notions of the complexities of interpretation, as well more complicated coding implications (Fink, 2013).

### 8.3 Questionnaire dissemination and sampling strategy

The initial aim was to disseminate the questionnaire to a ‘captive’ audience post in-service training opportunity. In order to maximise the response rate, the intention of the ‘face to face’ opportunity was to request that the questionnaires be completed and returned ‘on the spot’. A concomitant advantage was being available to respond to any queries. For, as Feilzer (2010) comments survey questions can be open to interpretation by different respondents. A second benefit was to try to avoid any ‘gaps’,

for, as Denscombe (2009) states “Item non-response rates are a significant factor affecting the quality of questionnaire data” (p. 281).

In practice, due to a range of practical factors, an online version of the questionnaire was ultimately used (an offline version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3). This decision afforded a series of benefits for this research study. Namely, it provided both a cost effective and time efficient tool. It gave access to a wider geographic, as well as enabling the potential for self-administration by a greater number of respondents. The software provided accessible data collection and display features, as well as opportunities to incorporate picture, audio and video excerpts. The potential to be creative in design was also enhanced by the offer of structural features such as skip patterns, drop down lists, pop up instructions, progress bars, as well as a log on/off facility with reminders (Robson, 2011). Robson also noted an important advantage of website surveys; in that they can be more easily adapted for respondents with physical impairments such as sight and hearing.

Conversely, constraints of online surveys comprise issues of access to respondents, since web page-based questionnaires, communicated by email, rely on potential respondents having access to the internet. This implies a bias in favour of perhaps the more affluent and educated socioeconomic strata of the populace (De Vaus, 2002; Robson, 2011). Similarly, the uniformity of questionnaire presentation cannot be guaranteed as technological aspects, such as the choice of browser, operating system, speed and monitor size impact on the appearance of the survey (Robson). In this respect, the disadvantages of computer access were minimised for the current study, as the participants were assured internet access through their school account.

The online, web-based `Google Forms` app<sup>16</sup> was selected to devise the questionnaire due to the ease of use, the provision of data feedback in real time and the option of data collation and representation in the form of spreadsheets, bar graphs and pie charts.

A quasi-purposive sampling strategy was adopted for this study. As De Vaus notes:

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<sup>16</sup> At the time of submission, the online version of the questionnaire remained available at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ut1gMTfsKI4y5etp4TdksAbIK2NHmJJ2KiXc0Lc9y6o/edit>



Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where cases are judged as typical of some category of cases of interest to the researchers... while not ensuring representativeness, such a method of selection can provide useful information (De Vaus, 2002, p. 90).

Reception teachers from infant and/or primary schools from seven counties in the East Midlands of England provided the population of interest. Working from web-based local authority directories, a catalogue was created, listing contact details for 500 such schools. This catalogue provided the information required to send personalised introductory emails to Headteachers. It is not possible to evidence whether the Headteachers received these messages or, subsequently, whether these were forwarded to Reception teachers. Thus, the final sample is considered to be `quasi-purposive` (George, 2011; Hodges, 2011). Furthermore, the participant sample comprised teachers who had not only received this email but who were also available and willing to contribute to the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Thus, the self-selecting group of respondents met the criteria of the particular population of interest, with the attendant hope that they might be a rich source of information, and so contribute illuminating insights about the central issues of the research study (Patton, 1990).

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the findings from this quasi-purposive sampling strategy, with a self-selecting group of participants, can result in unrepresentative findings (van Hoeven et al., 2015). This can limit the potential for further generalisation, which in turn may pose a threat to the external validity of the study. Hence, due consideration, as well as compensatory strategies were adopted to to mitigate this particular challenge. For instance, survey completion by a cross-section of respondents within the target group was encouraged to make the sample as representative as possible. As detailed below, invitations to participate were sent to 500 Headteachers in schools of various types, including local authority schools, academies as well as independent schools encompassing a diverse range of socio-demographic contexts.

Second, the stated aim (section 8.1) of this research study was to generate warranted findings to explain the phenomenon, rather than categorical truths. Thus, the goal was to facilitate theoretical generalisation, rather than empirical representation. That said, in recognition that the sample was small, nonparametric tests were explored and applied to the data. This was with a view to assess whether any statistically significant findings

could be drawn from the data with inference potential and thus applied to the wider population (section 8.6).

Initial invitations to complete the questionnaire were disseminated by email. With the aim of achieving 100 returns, five hundred such invitations, personally addressed to the Headteachers, were sent to infant and primary schools across seven counties in the East Midlands of England. The accompanying letters of introduction (Appendices 4b and 4c) sought permission and support from the school leaders, with the hope that the questionnaire would be forwarded to the Reception teacher(s). In addition, with a view to canvassing widely, the managers of the seven local Music Hubs and Early Years Foundation Stage teams were approached to request their support in recruiting participants for this research endeavour. Booster strategies were employed in a concerted effort to increase the number of initial returns from 17. These involved initiatives such as the offer of EYFS training in exchange for an invitation to attending Reception teachers to participate in the study. Social media, in the form of tweeting the questionnaire link by a Music Hub representative and a response to a request on a closed Early Year's Facebook page were also potential sources of respondents, as the on-line survey instrument enabled open access to anyone with the appropriate background. These endeavours were recorded in the research log (Appendix 12).

Of the 500 Reception teachers invited to take part in the online questionnaire, 17 initial responses were recorded. One practical barrier was concerned with access. The `blind`, impersonal `mail out` procedure to source respondents was liable to a three-tier set of constraints before reaching the target audience. First, the `gatekeeper` such as the school administrator may have chosen to reject the message. Second, the Headteacher also may not have read or decided to not forward the email and finally, the Reception teacher may have decided not to participate in the survey (De Vaus, 2002; Robson, 2011).

These 'gatekeeper' constraints were evidenced in the current study in three forms. First, noted as a result of a chance encounter with one such Receptionist who verbally reported that she had not 'forwarded the message, as the Headteacher was inundated by mail'. Second, the receipt of an emailed acknowledgement from another local school: "Unfortunately we are unable to help at this time as this is a very busy term". The final example was an emailed response from a Reception teacher who wrote: "I have had your e-mail and at the moment haven't got the time to do this but will consider it in the summer holidays" (Anon).

Additionally, Aldridge and Levine (2001) cite further reasons why people may be reluctant to take part in surveys. These include scepticism, consumerism, competition, survey fatigue, privacy intrusion, and finally stress or dislike of form filling. For this research study, written and verbal reports indicated that timing, busyness and gatekeepers were the three prime reasons for the poor response rate. The timing of the questionnaire dissemination in the latter part of the summer term was unfortunate, yet unavoidable. It could be said that schoolteachers and schools were perpetually busy by the very nature of their role and working environment. Gillham (2007) advises that questionnaires need to be intrinsically rewarding, interesting, worthwhile, of personal relevance and this was certainly evidenced by the responses that were received, for instance "Music is my passion!"

Ultimately, strategies employed to increase the number of questionnaire returns included `follow up` letters (Appendices 5a and 5b), as well as approaching colleagues from local networks for support and introductions to potential participants. These additional gatekeepers included a Chief Executive Officer of a small local Multi Academy Trust with primary schools, an Independent Music Education Consultant and a County Early Years Coordinator. Making these connections and following through with a training session and meeting potential respondents resulted in almost 39 completed questionnaires from Reception teachers and a further online form from a School Leader in Education for music (DfE, 2014<sup>17</sup>). Two additional points must be noted. First that due to practical factors, one questionnaire was not fully completed and that this was accounted for in the data analyses. Second, that a few of the later questionnaires were presented as hard copies, completed by hand and faithfully transcribed to the online summary record document.

## 8.4 Interviews: purpose, strengths and challenges

The hypothetical basis of the questionnaire element of the research study was one of exploration, to set a broad contextual frame in advance of the more in-depth interviews. As the research design had a progressive focus, the data emerging from the quantitative questionnaires informed the decisions regarding the content and direction of the qualitative interviews. The goal was to create a generative guide of interview

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/specialist-leaders-of-education-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>

questions, bound by the dataset emerging from the questionnaire, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. Thus, the aim was to develop an iterative and dialogical relationship between data collection and analysis. The semi-structured interview provides both a sequence of predetermined, uniform questions, as well as offering opportunities to explore in greater depth the interests and issues the interviewee might consider important (Aldridge & Levine, 2001; Brinkmann, 2013). Mills (2001) sums this notion by suggesting that the semi-structured interview:

... allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling (Mills, 2001, p. 285).

Thus, the semi-structured interview was selected as the qualitative method employed to delve deeper into the issues arising from the questionnaire data, in response to the four research questions. In other words, a framework of questions was planned and prepared in advance (Appendix 8), yet, remained flexible until post questionnaire data collection. This allowed for related issues to be explored as they arose.

Burgess (1988) considers interviews to be “Conversations with a purpose” (p. 153). Mills (2001) points out the features which determine the difference between a conversation and an interview. Conversations are not usually scheduled for a particular time, nor place and a prepared set of questions is not common. Moreover, the delineated roles and titles of the talkers, such as participant, respondent, informant, are only common in interviews. Kvale (1996) proffers the view:

An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996, p.14, emphasis in original).

Kvale describes two dimensions of interviewing: (1) the thematic, generating theory and knowledge; and (2) the dynamic dimension which is concerned with creating positive, interpersonal relations between the interviewer and interviewee. Rubin and Rubin (2004) label this approach ‘responsive interviewing’, explaining that:

The term responsive interviewing is intended to communicate that qualitative interviewing is a dynamic and iterative process, not a set of tools to be applied mechanically (Rubin & Rubin, 2004, chap. 1, p. 15).

Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that interviews are constructed, artificial events which enable participants to share their interpretations of their world context with the aim of gathering information in order to respond to the research questions. More specifically, a semi-structured interview could be interpreted as a conversation between two people

whereby the participant responds with answers to loosely planned, yet focused questions posed by the interviewer in order to illuminate some phenomenon.

Interviews mostly occur face to face, in person, or by telephone. Although, nowadays it is perhaps increasingly more likely that they take place online due to the proliferation of digital media interface technologies such as *Skype*, *Google Hangout* and *Facebook Messenger*.

Perceived benefits of the interview as a research method comprise, first, a higher response rate due to the personal dimension of the request. Also, invited participants tend to be more involved and motivated (Cohen, et al., 2011). Second, the multi-sensory nature of the interview process affords opportunities for flexible use of time and space; and finally, questions can be clarified for the participants or probed further to encourage complete or deeper responses to complex issues (Robson, 2011; Cohen, et al., 2011).

Gillham (2007) describes additional strengths of the interview process, indicating that: (4) more complete data of a higher quality is collected; (5) interviewees may prefer talking instead of writing; and (6) the researcher has more control over how the questions are answered, including making on the spot judgements as to the seriousness or integrity of the answers. Brinkmann (2013) reinforces this notion by commenting that conversations can be gently directed to remain relevant to the research questions, or alternatively the interviewee may be encouraged to take more of a lead which may introduce some new ideas. A final advantage of interviews is that it is possible to create an atmosphere of sensitivity, trust and discretion contributing to the confidence of the participant to share his/her experience of the phenomenon. (Brinkmann, 2013; Mills, 2001). Particular benefits for the current study included the personal dimension which facilitated diverse, interesting and meaningful conversations.

As a research method reliant on the interpersonal skills and experience of the researcher, disadvantages of the interview process may include the possibility that interviewees may not feel at ease `face to face` and be less open than they might be in comparison with an anonymous interaction. Interviewing is a craft which involves the practice of reciprocal interactive dialogue. Dominance on the part of the interviewer could impact on the respondent electing to withhold information (Kvale, 1996). Similarly, the concord or discord of the social status of both parties such as ethnic

background, age, gender or class may affect the data (Robson, 2011). Interviewer subjectivity and bias whereby, unintentionally, answers to questions are influenced by non-verbal cues from the researcher could also impact on the data. Conversely, Brinkmann notes:

It is very common to find that participants are eager to be “good interviewees,” wanting to give the researcher something that is valuable, and this can paradoxically block the production of interesting stories and descriptions (Brinkmann, 2013, p.16).

Further limitations comprise potential interviewee fatigue and the possible difficulty of guaranteeing anonymity (Cohen, et al., 2011). Challenges for the inexperienced researcher of the current study included maintaining a concordant, reciprocal, interactive dialogue with the interviewees. Indeed, ensuring the process was both productive in terms of data collection, as well as a positive and interesting experience for the participants felt quite the `balancing act` at times.

## 8.5 Developing the semi-structured interviews

Along the continuum of interviewing protocols, from structured to unstructured, the semi-structured interview offers three main advantages (Brinkmann, 2013). These include: (1) enabling follow up questions for those topics introduced and considered important by the participants; (2) the interviewer can be observed as a partner in the construction of knowledge as a result of the reciprocal dialogue; and (3) the researcher is able to focus the interview towards the relevant research themes. Kvale (1996), defines the semi-structured life-world interview as:

... an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1996, chap. 5, p. 2).

Additional benefits are that the semi-structured interview may produce data that can be analysed statistically and second, unplanned responses can add an enriched dimension to the interview process. Certainly, the latter additional benefit was noted in the course of the current study, as some participants contributed some interesting and thought-provoking additional themes. Similarly, the ‘in the moment’ and ‘face to face’ dynamic of the semi- structured interview process enabled the interviewees opportunities to explore tangential points and issues.

Challenges of the semi-structured interview include the great skills required of the interviewer and direct comparability between interviews may not be possible as the questions may not be the same, nor the responses similar. The challenge of 'managing' the interviews to ensure equality of opportunity for breadth and depth of responses was evidenced by the researcher in the current study. This was particularly noted on those occasions when a fairly closed response was received further to a question. However, in one particular case, this challenge was balanced by the bonus of vocal and body percussive responses to further illustrate a point.

Kvale (1996) classifies questions into the following categories: introductory, follow up, probing, specifying, direct, indirect, structuring, and interpreting. Rubin and Rubin (2004) condense the classification of question types into three groups: main questions, probes and follow ups, suggesting that these three question types "elicit depth, detail, vividness, nuance, and richness" (p. 7). Both Kvale (1996) and Mills (2001) offer the funnel shaped interview as a *modus operandi*, that is beginning the interview with general or indirect questions leading to the more specific or direct questions.

Rubin and Rubin (2004) describe the main questions as the scaffolding or skeleton of the interview. These questions, prepared in advance, address the research questions, ensuring full depth and breadth of exploration. Probing questions are the techniques employed to maintain the focus of the dialogue, as well as for requesting clarification or elaboration of issues discussed. This can be achieved using body language, gentle vocalisation and active listening techniques to encourage further elucidation (Patton, 1990). With regard to follow up questions, Rubin and Rubin advise that these should respond to issues considered important to the interviewee that relate to the research questions or perhaps those that:

... are puzzling or unclear and that suggest concepts, themes, or ideas that you did not anticipate, that take you in new directions in understanding your research topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2004, p. 8).

The art of active listening is essential to follow up questioning. That is, comprehending and responding to the meaning of what is being said by the interviewees and then asking additional questions in order to obtain further depth and detail on the issues most relevant to the research questions (Patton, 1990; Robson, 2011; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2004). This in-depth, detail and richness which comprise the main aim of the qualitative interview is often referred to as 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973;

Rubin & Rubin, 2004). An interview guide with an outline of themes to be discussed with suggested questions is recommended as an aide-memoire (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2004).

The interview guide (Appendix 8) for the current study comprised three open-ended main themes inviting participants to share (1) their experience as a Reception teacher; (2) their initial teacher training; and also (3) the contribution of music to their daily life. Aligning more closely with the study research questions, a second tier of more focused questions, including bespoke references to their individual questionnaire responses were posed. These comprised such topic areas as (a) general and music (adult-led and child-initiated) planning for the week; (b) planning for musical progression; (c) recording individual musical learning and development; (d) differentiation in musical learning; (e) continuing professional development; and (f) perceived need for further musical training and support.

The sampling strategy for the qualitative strand of the study involved the selection of a random, quasi-purposive sample of participants who demonstrated distinctive characteristics to help contribute to a rich and thick interpretation of the data. The relationship between the questionnaire and interview samples can be described as 'nested', in that the qualitative group being interviewed were a subset of the larger sample of participants completing the questionnaire (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The rationale for the choice of sampling strategy is explained:

The central idea that if participants are provide a good qualitative study in which the intent is to provide a complex purposefully chosen to be different in the first place, then their views will reflect this difference and picture of the phenomenon (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 174).

An invitation to interview formed the final part of the questionnaire (Appendix 4a). If respondents wished to participate further in the research, they were offered the option of being contacted individually subsequently. An explanation of the purpose, process and procedures was given. They could then decide to opt in or opt out of further involvement. Upon opting in, participants were required to give their written informed consent to be interviewed. Interviewees had the right to withdraw their consent to participate at any time. The researcher also considered the potential risks or benefits to the participant, ensuring no possibility of harm or source of discomfort. The overriding intention was to ensure that the eight interviewees felt free and safe to talk (Kvale, 1996; Miller & Bell, 2012; Brinkmann, 2013). A further interview took place with a



primary music specialist with the status of School Leader in Education (SLE). Drawing on their specialist knowledge and expertise, incumbents of this role support and mentor colleagues across schools (DfE, 2014). Her questionnaire responses were not included in the general quantitative data analysis as she did not fit the profile of a generalist Reception teacher. However, this interview provided some additional insights, from a different perspective, which were considered to be beneficial to the study. It has therefore been included in the qualitative analyses.

## 8.6 Analyses of the questionnaire and interview data

The ultimate intention of the analysis phase of the study was to triangulate the quantitative and qualitative strands of data with the relevant corpus of literature. Where applicable, appropriate and available, supplementary documentary evidence supported this triangulation. The objective was to view the data from multiple perspectives, so promoting the dual concepts of reliability and validity. As Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007) state: “validity...serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data, the results and the interpretations” (p. 210). Yet, prior to this triangulation, it was first necessary to subject the quantitative data to statistical analysis and qualitative data to thematic analysis.

Data analyses are based on a small return of 39 completed questionnaires from responding Reception teachers. `Google Forms` offered a further advantage by automatically collating the questionnaire results both in individual and collective formats. The latter were transferred and coded in *Microsoft Excel* to generate the initial set of descriptive data for analysis. The *Statistical Programme for Social Sciences software programme (SPSS)*<sup>18</sup> was selected to undertake the secondary tier of descriptive data analyses. The literature review had suggested the pertinence of four key participant variables that might assist in the search for nuanced patterns of interest. These formed the basis of cross-tabulation within the statistical analyses. The four participant variables were: (1) EYFS age specific training; (2) length of teaching experience on the basis of the training decade; (3) experience of EYFS age specific music CPD; and (4) self-identification as a musician. The impact of the small population

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<sup>18</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.spss.com>

sample on the cross tabulations must be noted. Converting the numerical data into percentages allowed for meaningful comparisons between datasets.

The application of a range of inferential statistical analyses tests using *SPSS* was also considered with a view to exploring the significance of the data, as well as the inference potential of the findings to the wider population. Nonparametric tests were researched since the normal `bell curved` distribution of the population could not be assumed. This was due to the small population sample size, (n=39), drawn from a particular locality (small regional area in the East Midlands of England). The *Chi-squared test of independence* (Field, 2018) was intended to determine the strength of association between the nominal categorical variables of two groups from the single population. However, the small population sample precluded the use of this test in its original form, so the variant known as *Fisher's Exact test of independence* (Field, 2018) was adopted to overcome the issue of the small number of expected counts in each cell. A number of research questions required `collapsing` and recoding in order to create the required two by two contingency tables. This process included the participant variable `Period trained` (Q.70) which was recoded to form two categories: `longer ago` (trained in 1970s/1980s) and `more recent` (trained in 2000s/2010s). Similarly, to ensure more of the categorical variables from the questionnaire data were compatible with the bifold (2 x 2) contingency table requirements of the *Fisher's Exact test*, three new variables were created by recoding questions 72, 73 and 74.

In respect of further analyses of the ordinal or continuous dependent variables from the questionnaire data, the non-parametric *Mann-Whitney U test* (Field, 2018) was chosen to compare the sample means of groups from this small population of Reception teachers in search of data of statistical significance. Finally, in pursuit of content validity, a descriptive summary of the questionnaire results was used as the basis of a member checking strategy (Roulston, 2010). Respondents for whom contact information was provided were asked to confirm the accuracy of these results.

With regard to the qualitative data, all the interviews were audio recorded, with participant consent, using the Zoom H1 Handy Portable Digital Recorder<sup>19</sup>. The process commenced with the interpretative transcription of the recorded interviews which `requires a rigorous and thorough `orthographic` transcript - a `verbatim` account

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<sup>19</sup> An iPad was also used as a `back up` recording instrument.

of all verbal ... utterances” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). The intention had been to complete the coding using the analysis software *NVivo*<sup>20</sup>. However, in practice much was completed by `hand and eye`. The benefit of the manual procedure proved to be a closer involvement and working knowledge of the data. Guest, MacQueen and Namey, (2012), describe the analytical process of `memoing`, suggesting two forms of this particular protocol. First:

Memos of varying lengths are attached to the raw data throughout all stages of analysis and are incrementally interwoven to generate a rich and though understanding of a data set (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012, p. 124).

The second, broader description of the manual procedure involves using memos to “hyperlink different units and types of raw data together” (p. 124). The `hand and eye` protocol adopted for thematically analysing the interview data for the current research study facilitated the initial coding process, through to collating the codes into overarching themes.

Thematic analysis of the interviews involves searching for patterns of meaning, identified within the data set that related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As an inductive data driven analytical process, thematic coding relies on the iterative search for patterns of potential interest, as well as an ongoing reflexive dialogue with full immersion in the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Initial codes of interest were identified and the relationships between codes considered so that they could be combined to create overarching themes. The themes were then defined and organised “into a coherent and internally consistent account with accompanying narrative” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). Remaining ‘close and true’ to the data, ideally a prerequisite of thematic analysis, typified as an immersive, recursive, organic and inductive process (Op. cit.). Non-reliant on a pre-existing coding frame, nor `a priori` codes, the data `story is` presented as an interpretative analytic account grounded in and emerging from the data (Op. cit.). A visual ‘mind map’<sup>21</sup> was devised for the purpose of connecting the interpretative and recursive data story to the study

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<sup>20</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.qsrinternational.com>

<sup>21</sup> Generated:  
[https://www.lucidchart.com/users/login?fbclid=IwAR2h94HuSS02sbb\\_FuQNNNqI4HQwUzFuz1ixeESpsoh9klm3mC6VbpcY1Lw](https://www.lucidchart.com/users/login?fbclid=IwAR2h94HuSS02sbb_FuQNNNqI4HQwUzFuz1ixeESpsoh9klm3mC6VbpcY1Lw)

research questions (Chapter 10). This graphic 'mapping' procedure demonstrated how the emergent themes related, interconnected and responded to the research questions.

As with the questionnaire phase, a member checking strategy was employed. A summary report of the interviews outlining the main themes were submitted to the participants for information and verification. This process of asking participants to confirm the accuracy of the data was harnessed to aid content validity.

## 8.7 Bias, validity and reliability

Issues of bias, validity and reliability must be considered when collecting and analysing all forms of empirical data. As Roulston (2010) suggests: "Rigor, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and plausibility" (p.10) must all be assured. Bias can occur in a research study from the start in the self-selection of participants. In this case, those who volunteered to complete questionnaires or undergo interviews may have been more concerned with music education. Conversely, those with a less positive outlook on this area of the curriculum could have been more reluctant to take part (Fink, 2013). Similarly, responses from the participating confident music specialists as opposed to the reluctant generalist teachers may have been a source of bias.

A number of the above considerations were taken into account and strategies put into place in an effort to counter potential issues of sample bias during the questionnaire data collection phase (Denscombe, 2009). These comprised: (1) the electronic 'mail out' to 500 Headteachers; (2) attempts to source respondents from alternative networks; and (3) employing different methods of presentation (online/hard copy). In other words, a wide net was cast, with the intention of offering members of the particular population of Reception teachers` equal access to respond to the invitation to complete the questionnaire. Efforts to counter the possibility of non-response bias (Robson, 2011) included sending personalised invitations, where possible and follow up reminders to encourage completion and submission. To address issues of response bias within the questionnaire due consideration was given to issues such as: (1) ensuring careful wording of the questions to avoid ambiguity (Robson, 2011); (2) offering non-leading answer options; (3) grouping questions by topic; and (4) leaving demographic questions until later in the survey.

To counter the potential issue of bias at the interview stage, the goal was to refrain from asking leading questions and to ensure essential follow up questions were posed (Roulston, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2004). The aim of the follow up questions and probes was to ensure validity, by accounting for the trustworthiness of human memories (Brinkmann, 2013), as well as the integrity of the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). Furthermore, this researcher made every effort to keep at the forefront of her mind, an awareness of the potential influence of her own experiences and the cultural lens through which she interpreted the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). Similarly, it was important to be sensitive to the concept of `asymmetrical power relations` in the interview dynamic. Kvale (1996) comments on this notion, comparing and contrasting the research interview with an open, everyday conversation between partners of an equal parity:

The interviewer has a scientific competence, he or she initiates and defines the interview situation, determines the interview topic, poses questions and decides which answers to follow up, and also terminates the conversation (Kvale, 1996, p.15).

An essential part of the research process, concerned with addressing the core issues of validity and reliability, involved becoming more self-aware as well as practising the art of critical self-reflection, For, as Rubin and Rubin (2004) suggest, these two key skills help to minimize bias and improve quality.

## 8.8 Ethical considerations

Full ethical clearance was given for this research study (Appendix 7). A copy of the application document was submitted to the Institute of Education Ethics committee (Appendix 7). A key aim through the process has been to to promote sound, professional practice by adopting clear ethical guidelines. These were based on the recommendations from literature including the BERA (2003) guidelines; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989/1991); the Data Protection Act (1988); and the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (2018). The recommended guideline criteria incorporated the following concerns:

- Respect the rights of participants, ask permission of Individuals at each level of the organization

- Respect privacy and avoid undue intrusion, inconvenience, embarrassment and causing of distress
- Bound by duty to protect participants from physical and mental harm
- Equality of opportunity and inclusion to ensure breadth of consultations
- Informed consent i.e., full, open and honest disclosure with regard to the purpose, required commitment and type of involvement, data collection and dissemination procedures
- Conceal the identity of the individual, group and institution
- Maintain anonymity and confidentiality of data (including data storage)
- Commit to accurate presentation of the process, data and findings by reflecting back and sharing for verification
- Agree and acknowledge ownership/copyright of data, drawings, audio and video recordings
- Communicate ethical principles to colleagues

Further to the recommendation by Miller and Bell (2012), the use of a research log provided the key means to monitor these criteria (Appendix 12). This was invaluable to document ongoing ethical reflections and decisions made during the research process.

## 8.9 Summary

A mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies, was adopted in order to respond to the research questions. An online questionnaire was devised to seek quantitative answers to the investigative dimensions of the research questions. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews offered more in-depth, rich and comprehensive insights.

A quasi-purposive sampling strategy was employed to source the questionnaire respondents from a specific population, namely school Reception teachers in the East Midlands of England. The questionnaire involved a total of 39 self-selecting respondents. A nested subgroup of these respondents, demonstrating a spread of distinctive characteristics, emerged from the quantitative sample as interview participants.

Aiming for an iterative and dialogical relationship between data collection and analysis to facilitate notions of reliability and validity, the quantitative data was collected and analysed using both *Microsoft Excel* and *SPSS*. This facilitated higher levels of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. In practice the majority of the qualitative questionnaire data was thematically analysed by 'hand and eye'. The collated results of the questionnaire, as well as a summary report of the interviews outlining the main themes were submitted to the participants for information and verification. A list of ethical criteria and good practice was drawn up and applied at all stages.

## Chapter 9: Questionnaire data analyses

### 9.1 Introduction

This research study sought to explore teacher confidence to facilitate children's musical learning and development in the Reception Year at school. An online, web-based questionnaire was devised to seek quantitative answers to the investigative dimension of the four research questions, as stated in Chapter 8.1. Further to a concerted effort, outlined in Chapter 8.3, to achieve 100 completed questionnaires, data analyses are based on a small return from 39 respondents.

The collated questionnaire data were transferred from the web-based *Google Forms* app and coded in *Microsoft Excel* to generate the initial set of descriptive data for analysis. The *Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS)* software programme was selected to undertake the secondary tier of descriptive data analyses. Four key participant variables outlined in Chapter 8.6 formed the basis of cross-tabulation within the statistical analyses. The application of a range of inferential statistical analyses tests using SPSS were also considered with a view to exploring the significance of the data, as well as the inference potential of the findings to the wider population (Chapter 8.8).

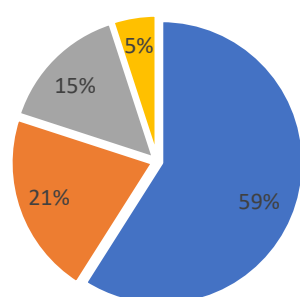
### 9.2 Professional contexts

38 Reception teachers completed and submitted their responses to the questionnaire. (One incomplete proforma was returned and accounted for, with the appropriate adjustments made in the statistical analyses). An additional completed return, received from a School Leader in Education (SLE) for music, was omitted from the summary data, as the criteria of generalist Reception teacher was not being met.

Setting context questions regarding the school status, type, number on roll and location are depicted in the charts below. As illustrated in Figure 9.1, the majority (59%) of the respondents taught in Local Authority schools. Stand alone and Multi Academy Trusts were also represented, as indeed were Independent Schools. Figure 9.2 indicates that the majority of respondents worked in Primary schools, that is combining Early Years, Infant and Junior departments within one school. However, self-contained Infant

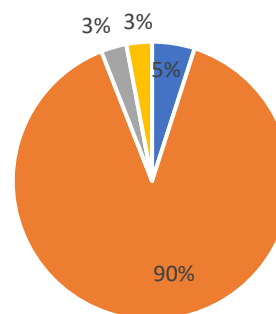


schools as well as independent Pre-Prep schools were also represented. Figure 9.3 demonstrates the size of the schools represented in the study, varying between very small (0-100) to very large (600+), with 1:4 respondents teaching in schools with 100 to 200 pupils on roll. Finally, Figure 9.4 presents the location of the schools, by county. Broadly three counties are represented more or less equally (1:4 each). In sum, these figures illustrate that the data collected from the questionnaires represented a good cross-section of contexts, both in range and variety. The sample also reflected the pronounced sex bias within the early childhood workforce. Based on an assessment of gendered forenames in returns, where names were given, there was only one confirmed male respondent to the questionnaire. This individual accounted for 3% of the sample, a figure in line with estimate recorded in the `Men in the Early Years` report (Davies, 2017) that, across England, only 2% of Early Years practitioners are male.



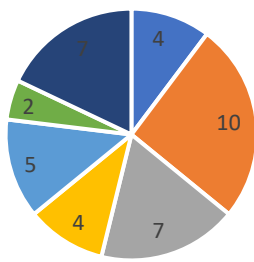
■ L.A. School  
 ■ Stand-alone Academy  
 ■ Multi Academy Trust

**Figure 9.1: School status**

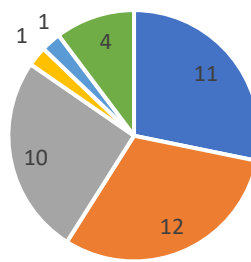


■ Infant school      ■ Primary School  
 ■ Pre-prep          ■ Other

**Figure 9.2: School type**



■ 0-100   ■ 100-200   ■ 200-300   ■ 300-400  
 ■ 400-500   ■ 500-600   ■ 600+



■ Johnstown   ■ Frankshire   ■ Gordonshire  
 ■ Grantshire   ■ Martinshire   ■ Unknown

**Figure 9.3:** School size (Number on roll)

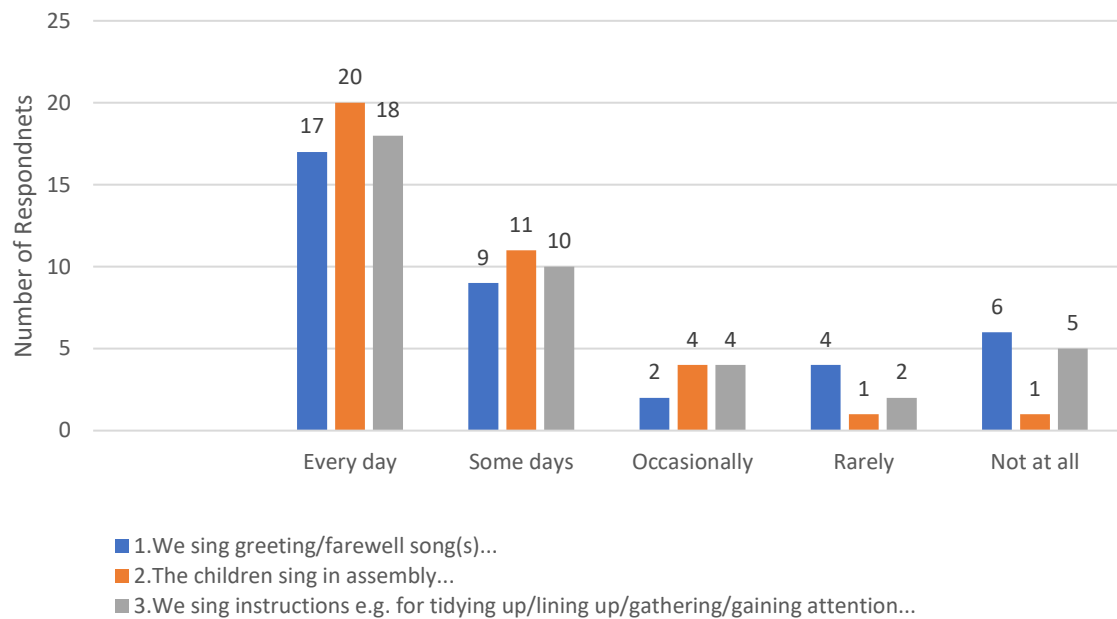
**Figure 9.4:** School location (by pseudonymised county)

### 9.3 The nature of musical learning in the Reception class

The first research question explored the nature of the musical activity occurring in the Reception class. Half (50) of the related questions were grouped into sub-sections, comprising: (a) Musical routine; (b) Learning through music; (c) Child-initiated musical learning (resources) and (d) Child-initiated musical learning (teacher observations).

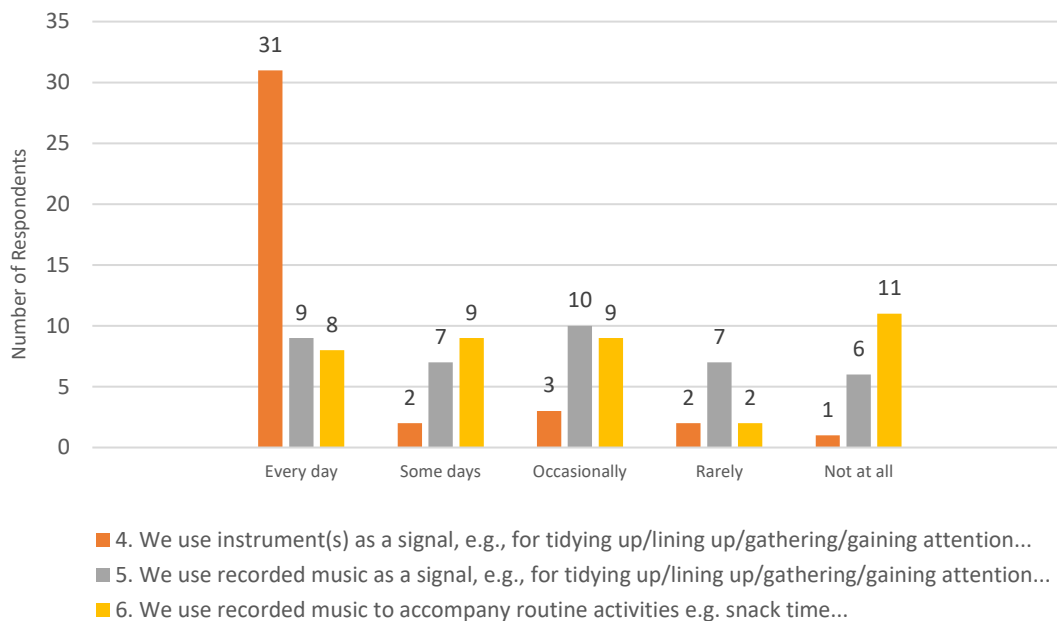
#### 9.3.1 Musical routine

Musical activities can be interwoven into the routines of the school day (Trainor, 1996; Trehub et al., 1997; Nakata & Trehub, 2004; Adnessi, 2009), implying that children of Reception class age may be immersed in an environment that is imbued with a musical ethos. The children in the Reception classes of the majority of the respondents experienced singing as part of their musical routine some days or every day of the week. Seventy-nine per cent (31:39) of Reception teachers noted that children sang in assembly either some days or every day. Two thirds (26:39) of respondents sang greeting/farewell songs with their children and 72% (28:39) of the teachers sang instructions for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention. Overall, there was a reported bias for children of school Reception age to experience singing in the course of their daily routine, as illustrated by Figure 9.5.



**Figure 9.5:** Singing activities are often integral to the daily routine

In addition to singing instructions, alternative means of signalling to the children such as using instrument(s) every or some days were more commonly practised by 85% (33:39) of the teachers. Using recorded music as a signal for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention was less uniform. Two in five respondents (41%) played recorded music for this purpose, either every or some days. One in four teachers (26%) used recorded music occasionally and one third of respondents rarely or not at all. Recorded music can also be employed to accompany routines such as snack time (Lee & Welch, 2017), but the Reception teachers were more divided on this matter. One in three (13:39) respondents used recorded music in this manner rarely or not at all; one in four (9:39) occasionally and 44% (17:39) of teachers either some days or every day. These results indicate that musical sounds (singing, instruments, recorded music) were more likely than not to be used as an instrumental accompaniment to the pattern of the school day in the Reception class. These data are presented in Figure 9.6.



**Figure 9.6:** The use of instrumental sounds and/or recorded music as signals and/or accompaniment

‘Carpet’ time (Hildebrandt, 1998; Naughton & Lines, 2013), when the children and staff congregate together, forms a routine part of the school day for Reception children. Musical activities are often integral to this daily session. Virtually all of the respondents (35:39, 90%) sang with their children at carpet time, either some or every day. Two thirds (27:39, 69%) of Reception teachers indicated that the children could dance at this point, either some or every day. A similar number of respondents (29:39, 74%) used the instruments with the children at carpet time, but less frequently, i.e., occasionally and some days. 87% (34:39) of Reception teachers used recorded music occasionally and some days at this point of the daily routine. These data, referenced in Table 9.1, indicate that musical activities are common to the carpet time experience.

**Table 9.1:** Musical activities at `carpet` time.

	7. We sing at carpet time...	8. We dance to music at carpet time...	9. We play soundmakers/ instruments at carpet time...	10. We listen to recorded music at carpet time...
Most days	22	6	0	4
Some days	13	21	15	22
Occasionally	4	10	14	12
Rarely	0	2	9	0
Not at all	0	0	1	0

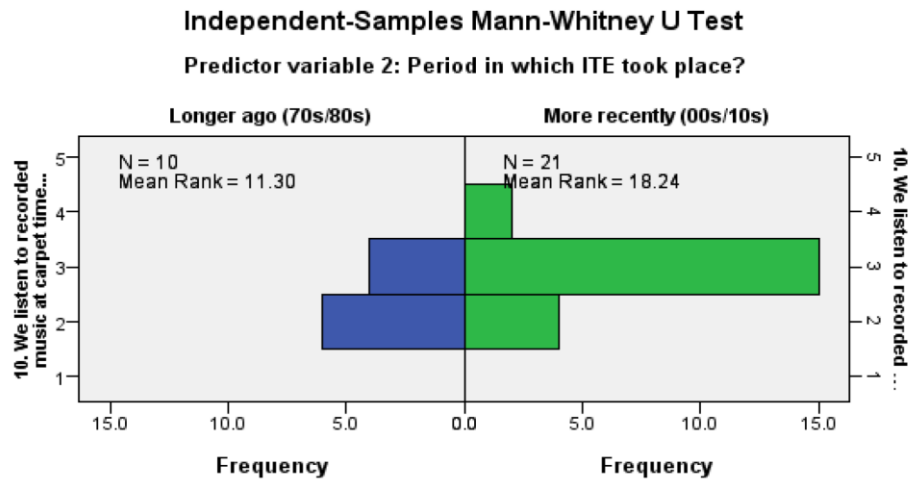
Further descriptive analyses of the data ensued by cross tabulating the four independent participator variables (EYFS trained; Training Decade i.e., length of experience; experience of musical CPD and whether the Reception teachers identified themselves as a Musician) with the dependent variables. Taking into account the relationship of the group membership ratios was an integral step in this analytical process to facilitate meaningful comparisons between groups. These differences are illustrated: (1) EYFS trained: non EYFS trained (55%: 45%); (2) Decade trained – 1970s/1980s: 2000s/2010s (26%: 45%); (3) music CPD experienced: not experienced (53%: 47%); (4) Musician: Non musician (31%: 61%). The first group of ten questions on the subject of the daily musical routine were analysed for emerging patterns.

Responses to the ten questions pertaining to how music was used in the course of the daily routine present the broad overview that EYFS trained respondents were more likely to engage in activities such as singing greeting songs and instructions every day than non EYFS trained teachers. This group of Reception teachers were also more likely to incorporate musical activities such as singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, as well as listening to recorded music most days or every day. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, the figures in Table 9.2 nevertheless suggest a trend towards EYFS trained teachers incorporating musical activities into their daily routine.

**Table 9.2:** Routine musical activities & the EYFS trained teacher

	<b>EYFS trained</b>	<b>Non EYFS trained</b>
Greeting songs (every day)	52% (11:21)	35% (6:17)
Sang instructions (every day)	55% (12:22)	41% (7:17)
Singing at carpet time (every day)	64% (14:22)	47% (8:17)
Dancing at carpet time (most days)	59% (13:22)	47% (8:17)
Playing instruments at carpet time (every day)	41% (9:22)	35% (6:17)
Listening to recorded music at carpet time (most days)	59% (13/22)	53% (9:17)

Taking into account the disproportionate ratio between the number of responses from the earliest trained Reception teachers with those more recently trained, a mixed picture is presented with regard to their typical engagement in routine musical activities. This is illustrated by contrasting the `singing greetings` with `singing instructions` dependent variables. In other words, 80% (8:10) of the more experienced teachers in this survey reported that they were more likely to sing greeting songs most days or every day as compared to 60% (12:20) of their less experienced counterparts. Yet, 40% (4:10) of this same group reported that they were less likely to sing instructions most days or every day in comparison with 81% (17:21) of their more recently trained colleagues. This `mixed picture` warranted further exploration in order to learn of any statistical significance when the mean ranks were compared. The data resulting from these combinations of variables were also analysed using the Mann-Whitney U Test. One finding of statistical significance emerged. This related to the group of more recently trained teachers (n= 21) who were more likely to encourage listening to recorded music as a carpet time activity (U = 152; p = 0.48). The result of the Mann-Whitney test in this case suggests that the differences in responses by the period in which respondents trained could be indicative of a genuine trend within the population of EYFS teachers more generally. This outcome is illustrated in Figure 9.7.



**Figure 9.7:** More recently trained Reception teachers are more likely to use recorded music at carpet time.

In terms of the research question, no significant patterns emerged from comparing those respondent teachers who had experienced music CPD training with those who had not on the subject of incorporating music activities into the daily routine. However, comparing the `musician/non musician` independent variables for this set of questions provided some intriguing findings worthy of further deliberation. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, it seems that the self-identifying musically accomplished Reception teachers in this survey were less likely to incorporate musical activities in the daily routine. This trend is illustrated in Table 9.3. Examples included singing instructions, as well as engaging in listening or instrumental playing activities at carpet time.

**Table 9.3:** Routine musical activities & the accomplished musician

	<b>Musician</b>	<b>Non-musician</b>
Sang instructions (every day)	33% (4:12)	56% (16:27)
Playing instruments at carpet time (most days)	17% (2:12)	48% (13:27)
Listening to recorded music at carpet time (most days)	42% (5:12)	63% (17:27)

### 9.3.2 Learning through music

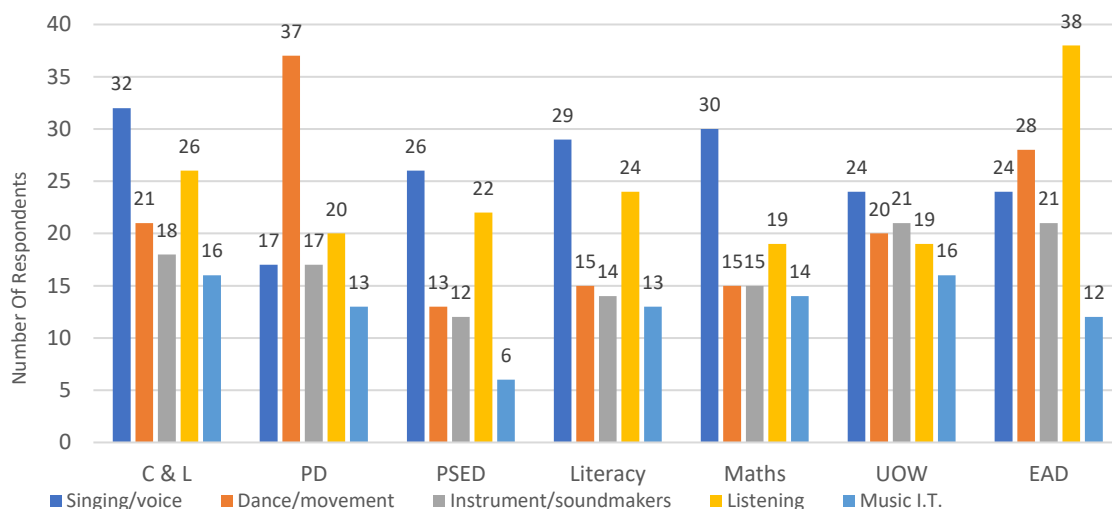
The second group of questions responding to the first research question explored how Reception teachers might use music to enrich and enhance learning across the curriculum. For, musical activities can have a functional purpose to scaffold the knowledge and understanding of the Prime and Specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2017). Overwhelmingly, Reception teachers used music in this manner (Table 9.4). A clear majority of respondents indicated that music activities were integrated into the Specific areas of Communication and Language (77%) and Physical Development (97%), as well as the Prime areas of Literacy (82%), Mathematics (85%), Understanding of the World (74%) and Expressive Arts and Design, other than music (72%). The Specific area of Personal and Social Education was the notable exception (56%), resulting in a more divided response from the respondents on the subject of the use of musical activities to enhance or help deliver this area of learning.

**Table 9.4:** Musical activities used to scaffold the Prime & Specific areas of learning.

	YES	%	No	%
11. C&L	30:39	77	9:39	23
12. PD	38:39	97	1:39	3
13. PSED	22:39	56	17:39	44
14. Literacy	32:29	82	7:39	18
15. Maths	33:39	85	6:39	15
16. UoW	29:39	74	10:39	26
17. EAD (other than music)	28:39	72	11:39	28

The nature of the musical activities employed to enrich or support the Specific and/or Prime areas of learning was explored. Singing appeared to predominate across five learning areas, apart from Physical Development where dance was the more significant activity (37:39, 95%) and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD, other than music). Listening activities featured more prominently in the EAD learning area (38:39, 97%). Figure 9.8 illustrates the deployment of musical activities across the Areas of Learning.





**Figure 9.8:** The deployment of the range of music activities across the Prime & Specific areas of Learning.

This second set of survey responses related to the first research question exploring the cross curricular functional purposes of music was also compared across the four participant variables. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, the figures in Table 9.5 suggest that EYFS trained respondents were more likely than non EYFS trained teachers to use musical activities to scaffold both prime and specific learning areas.

**Table 9.5:** Using musical activities to scaffold learning & the EYFS trained teacher

	EYFS trained	Non EYFS trained
<b>Physical Development</b>	100% (22:22)	94% (16:17)
<b>PSED</b>	64% (14:22)	47% (8:17)
<b>Mathematics</b>	91% (20:22)	76% (13:17)
<b>Understanding the world</b>	77% (17:22)	71% (12:17))
<b>Expressive Arts &amp; design (other than music)</b>	77% (17:22)	65% (11:17)

The more experienced teachers in this survey reported that they were more likely to use musical activities to scaffold learning in most curricular areas, other than Mathematics and Understanding of the world, than their more recently trained

counterparts. Noticeable differences were observed for the learning areas of (1) Literacy where 90% (9:10) experienced teachers were noted to incorporate musical activities to scaffold learning, as compared to 76% (16:21) for their more recently trained colleagues and (2) 90% (9:10) for EAD in contrast to 62% (13:21) of the recently trained respondents.

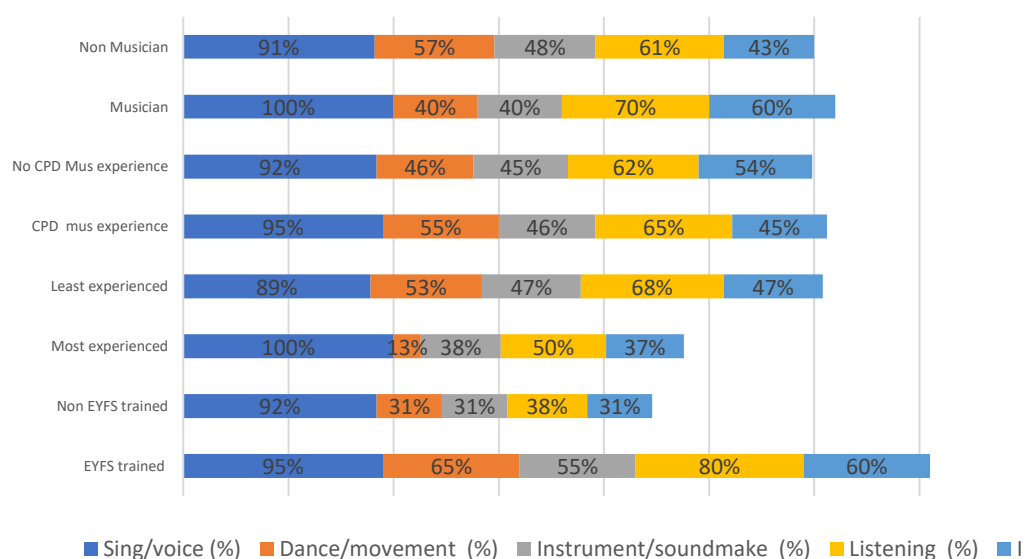
Those Reception teachers who had experienced music CPD were much more likely to use musical activities as a framework for learning than their survey colleagues in the learning areas of PSED (62% or 13/21: 50% or 9/18); Mathematics (95% or 20/21: 72% or 13/18); as well as Understanding the world (81% or 17/21: 67% or 12/18). The resultant findings from segmenting the `musician/non musician` participant variable highlighted that those survey respondents acknowledging their musical status were more likely than their colleagues to integrate musical activities to support learning in the curricular areas of Communication and Language (83% or 10/12 : 78% or 21/27); PSED (67% or 8/12 : 52% or 14/27); EAD (other than music 92% or 11/12 : 63% or 17/27).

The first research question, on the subject of musical activities occurring in the Reception classroom continued to be the focus for the ensuing subsection of questions (18 to 24). This group expanded on this thread by exploring the nature of the musical activities Reception teachers employed to scaffold learning across the curriculum. The range of activities to select from comprised: `Singing/voice, Dance/movement, Instrument/soundmakers, Listening, Music I.T.` Table 9.6 illustrates that vocal activities were predominant, although dance featured highly in both Physical Development and Expressive Arts and Design (other than music). Musical activities incorporating ICT and/or playing with instruments or other soundmakers were least likely to be employed by the survey respondents to scaffold cross curricular learning.

**Table 9.6:** Summary of the frequency of musical activities  
(% of Respondents, n=39)

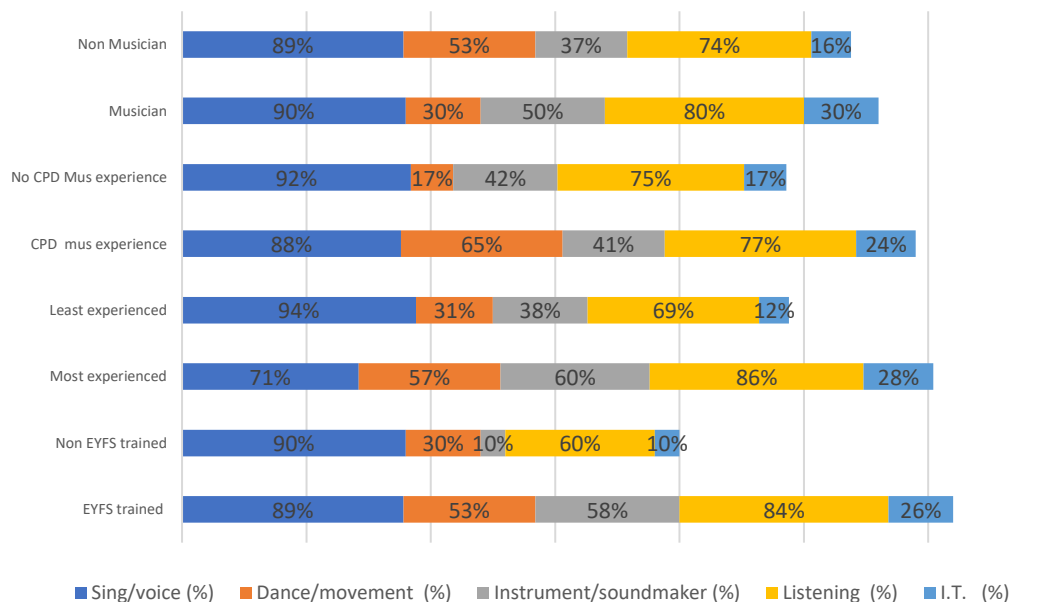
Learning area	C&L	PD	PSED	Literacy	Maths	UOW	EAD
Singing/ voice	82%	45%	68%	79%	79%	66%	63%
Dance/ Movement	55%	89%	26%	39%	42%	55%	76%
Instrument/ soundmakers	47%	45%	32%	37%	37%	55%	55%
Listening	68%	55%	58%	63%	53%	50%	66%
Music I.T.	42%	32%	16%	26%	39%	42%	32%

The type of musical activities chosen to scaffold learning across the seven EYFS learning areas were explored. Several patterns emerged further to segmenting the responses by the four participant variables. Figure 9.9 serves as an illustrative exemplar of the finding that EYFS trained Reception teachers reported that they were more likely to use musical activities to scaffold learning across all areas as compared with their non EYFS trained counterparts, or indeed, the other key participant variables focusing on experience, CPD input or being musically accomplished.



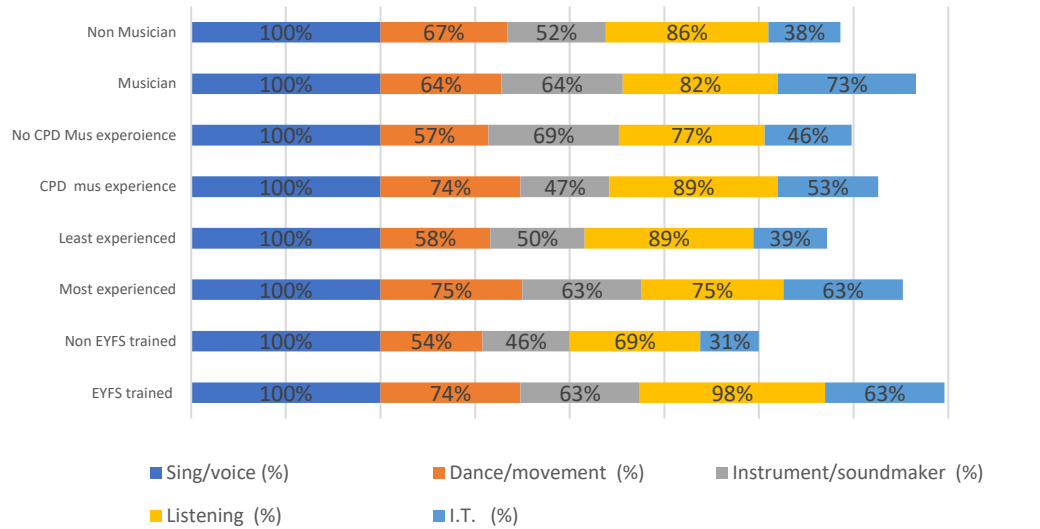
**Figure 9.9** A visual representation of the cumulative use of musical activities to scaffold learning in Maths, categorised by the participant variables.

The overview presented by the more experienced Reception teachers suggested that they were less likely to use musical activities overall to scaffold learning, except for PSED, although singing was the least likely activity to be included. Figure 9.10 illustrates these findings.



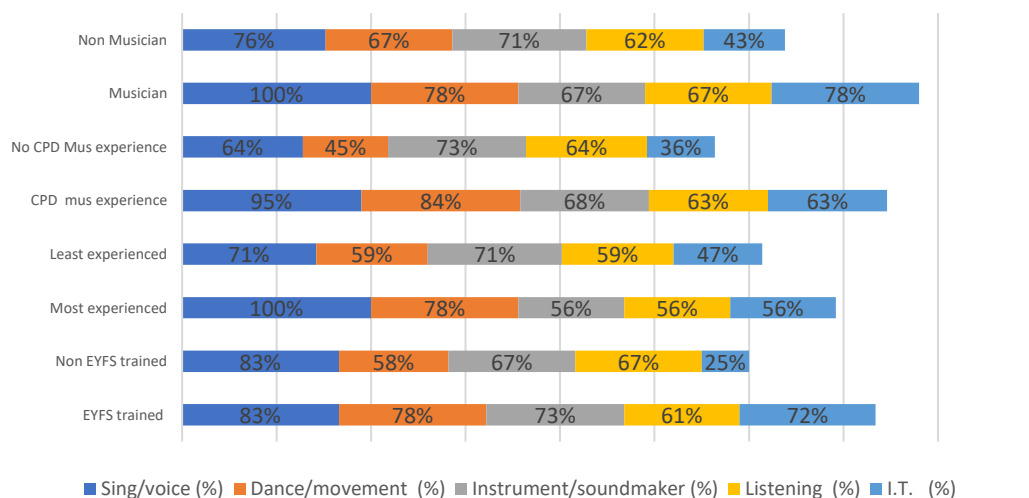
**Figure 9.10:** A visual representation of the cumulative use of musical activities to scaffold learning in PSED, categorised by the participant variables.

A mixed picture with regard to how musical activities were used to scaffold learning was presented by those Reception teachers who had experienced music CPD, the third participant variable. It is interesting to note that these CPD experienced practitioners were more likely to incorporate musical activities to scaffold learning in Communication and Language, as well as Literacy. A topic for further discussion in Chapter 11. Figure 9.11 demonstrates this finding.



**Figure 9.11:** A visual representation of cumulative use of musical activities to scaffold learning in C&L, categorised by the participant variables.

A curious, mixed overview was presented by the accomplished musicians, also worthy of further exploration in the next chapters, suggesting that musical activities (apart from using instruments/soundmakers) were more likely to be used for the Understanding the World than any of the other learning areas (Figure 9.12). Figure 9.11, above, also highlights that Reception teachers who were musicians also incorporated musical activities to support learning in Communication and Language as well as Literacy. This notion will be further explored in Chapters 10 and 11.



**Figure 9.12:** A visual representation of cumulative use of musical activities to scaffold learning in UOW, categorised by the participant variables.

The two-sided Fisher's Exact test was applied to these sets of data, exploring the types of musical activities the Reception teachers incorporated to scaffold learning across the seven areas of the EYFS curriculum. Findings of statistical significance were not found. However, a few potentially indicative results were identified. For instance, a p-value of 0.019 confirms that the more experienced teachers were more likely to use instruments/soundmakers to support learning in Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Three findings of statistical significance occur in the Understanding of the World learning area. First, the accomplished musicians were more likely to incorporate singing and vocal activities (2-sided Fisher's Exact test;  $p = 0.047$ ), as well as dance and movement activities ( $p = 0.042$ ). The final finding for this learning area reports the more experienced teachers were more likely to include music I.T. to support the children's learning ( $p = 0.024$ ). These statistically significant findings indicate the potential for these results to be generalised to the wider population of Reception teachers in the East Midlands.

### 9.3.3 Child-initiated musical learning: Resources

This sub-section of the questionnaire continued to explore the breadth of the first research question regarding the resourcing of musical activities taking place in the Reception classroom. Opportunities for child-centred music play, as well as the teachers' observations of the activities taking place were the focus for these questions. Almost all of the respondents (36:39, 92%) indicated that a 'sound' area for musical play was available every day or some days. This area was located outside in just under half of the classrooms (18:39, 46%), whilst 17:39 (44%) of teachers provided music areas both inside and outdoors.

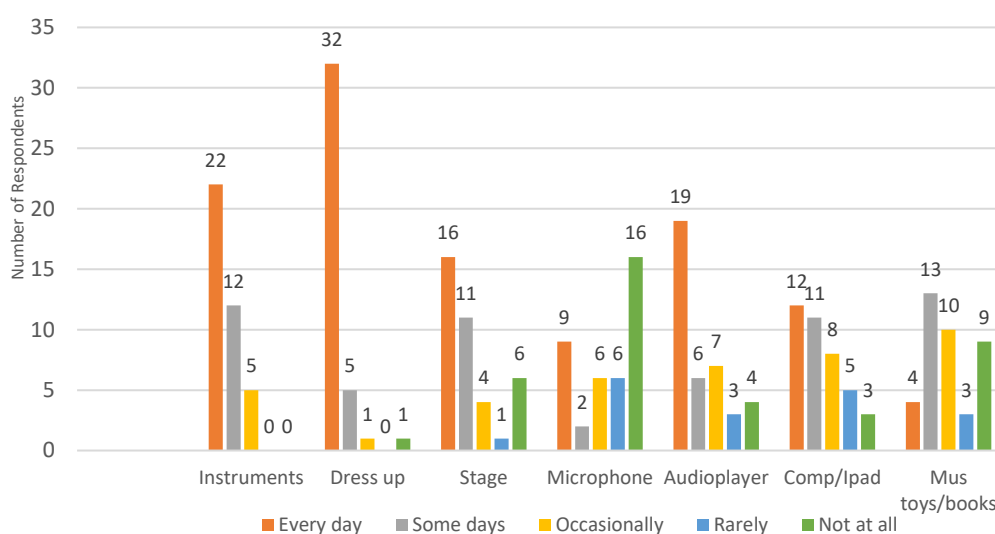
Two respondents added a further comment on the subject of the whereabouts of the music resources, indicating concerns about the size of the teaching area and the impact of the weather on electrical items in open air playing areas.

Usually outside, but sometimes inside for guided session then left for children to explore (Anon).

The children have access to instruments outside and CD players that can be plugged in when it's not raining, as our outside plug sockets are not undercover! Our indoor provision space is quite small, so we struggle to have dedicated 'areas' (Anon).

In terms of resources to stimulate child-initiated musical play, instruments were accessible either some or every day in the majority of cases (34:39, 87%). The

provision of a platform/stage was also common in Reception classes (27:39, 69%). Dressing up clothes were mostly available every day (32:39, 82%). Reception children could use an audio player for their musical play either some or every day in two thirds of cases. Similarly, children had access to a computer or iPad to engage in musical technological activities some or every day for 23:39 (59%) respondents. Whilst there was a clear bias towards the provision of resources such as instruments, dressing up clothes and a stage to stimulate musical play, children were less likely to be able to access a microphone (11:39, 28%) or musical books and toys (17:39, 43%) some or every day. These data are illustrated in Figure 9.13.



**Figure 9.13:** The resources provided by teachers to encourage child-initiated musical play.

A review of the resources provided by the EYFS trained respondents to encourage musical play demonstrated no consistent trend. Although, perhaps they were slightly less likely to provide these resources every day. One such example suggests that non-EYFS trained teachers were more likely to provide soundmakers every day to stimulate children`s music making, than their counterparts (71% or 12/17: 45% or 10/22). A similar picture was presented by the most experienced Reception teachers in this survey, with the exception of providing some technological resources. For instance, the more experienced respondents were more likely to provide an audio player (60% or 6/10: 48% or 10/21) and a computer/iPad (40% or 4/10: 19% or 4/21) every day to stimulate musical play than the more recently trained respondents. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, the figures in Table 9.7 suggest an unexpected trend indicating that the survey respondents who had engaged

in music CPD appeared to be less likely to provide resources for children to engage in musical activities on a daily basis.

Intriguing findings pertaining to the survey participants describing themselves as musicians suggest that they were less likely to provide a `sound` area (60% or 6/12: 85% or 23/27), nor soundmakers (42% or 5/12): 63% or 17/27) for children to engage in musical play every day.

**Table 9.7:** Providing resources for musical play & the CPD experienced teacher.

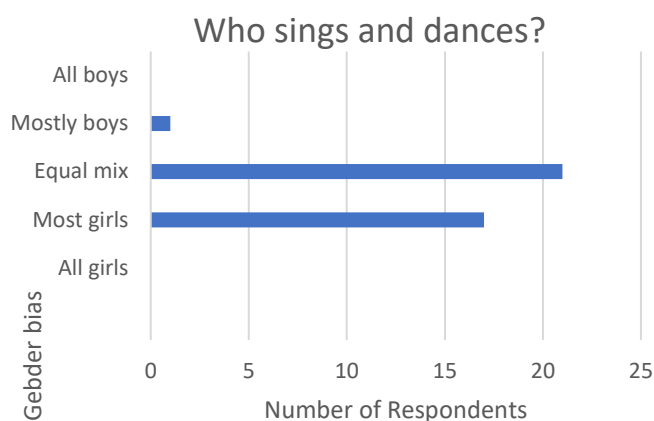
	CPD experienced	Non CPD experienced
Provide a `sound` area every day	67% (14:21)	83% (15:18)
Provide soundmakers every day	43% (9:21)	72% (13:18)
Provide an audioplayer every day	38% (8:21)	61% (11:18)
Provide a computer/iPad every day	24% (5:21)	39% (7:18)

#### 9.3.4 Child-initiated musical learning: Teacher observations

The final subset of questions responding to the first research question exploring the nature of musical learning in the Reception classroom relate to spontaneous musical play. The Reception teachers were asked to recall their observations of a variety of child-initiated musical play activities. Questions on the frequency of these observations and the gender bias (Custodero et al., 2016; Sundin, 1997), if applicable, were also included. Two thirds of the respondents (26:39, 67%) reported that at least half or some of the children in their classes were observed singing whilst engaged in child-initiated play, and that this occurred either some or most days (36:39, 92%). Similarly, a slightly lower percentage of teachers also reported that it was commonplace for their children to initiate other kinds of musical activity other than singing (25:39, 64%), either some or most days (35:39, 90% of cases). Children were observed to sing and dance during `free play` time in almost all instances (38:39, 97%). However, when asked to reflect on whether girls, boys or an equal mix favoured this musical activity, a gendered bias towards mostly girls engaging in singing and dancing was noted by 17:39 (44%)



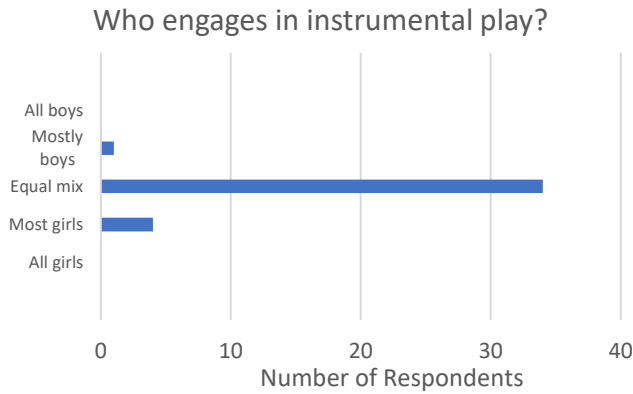
teachers, although 21:39 (54%) of respondents reported that an equal mix of boys and girls enjoyed singing and dancing, as illustrated in Figure 9.14.



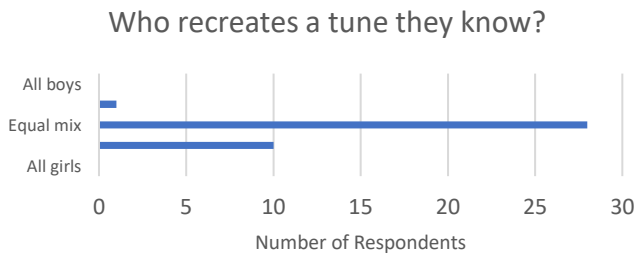
**Figure 9.14:** The gender bias of the children who chose to sing and dance.

In contrast, Figures 9.15 to 9.17 present a relatively different picture for instrumental and creative music making activities. The teachers observed that it was more likely to be an equal mix of children engaging in self-initiated instrumental play (34:39, 89%). In other words, it is possible that the children considered instrumental play to be a less gendered activity. Similarly, where music technological activities were available (59% of classes), the bias was towards an equal mix of pupil engagement.

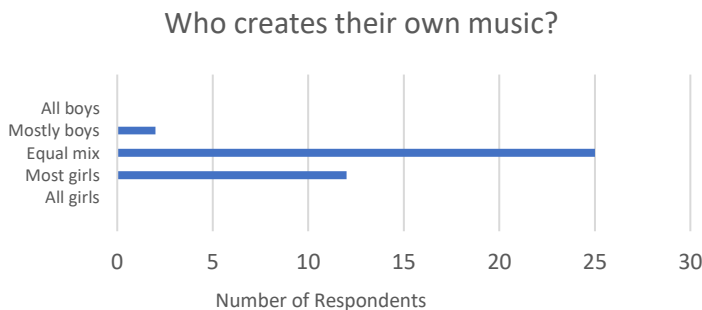
Respondents were also asked to consider their observations of children recreating well known tunes and composing their own music during self-initiated instrumental play. A large proportion of the Reception teachers (34/39, 87%) noted that children tried to recreate tunes they knew on the instruments. Nearly two thirds of the respondents recorded that it was an equal mix of boys and girls engaging in this type of instrumental activity. However, the figures also suggested a slight bias in that girls were found to favour recreating well known tunes in just over a quarter (26%) of cases. A similar distribution and bias were observed for children electing to compose their own music. Figures 9.15 to 9.17 illustrate these findings.



**Figure 9.15:** The gender bias of the children who chose to engage in instrumental play.



**Figure 9.16:** The gender bias of the children who chose to recreate a well-known tune.



**Figure 9. 17:** The gender bias of the children who chose to create their own music.

The last group of cross-tabulations responding to the first research question explored teacher`s observations of child-initiated play. On balance EYFS trained respondents were more likely to observe most children singing whilst playing (32% or 7/22: 24% or 4/17) and note children recreating tunes they know (91% or 20/22: 82% or 14/17) than their non-EYFS trained counterparts. On the subject of gender preferences it is interesting to note that the more recently trained Reception teachers taking part in the

survey were more consistently likely to observe an equal mix of children: (1) singing and dancing (52% or 13/21: 40% or 4/10); (2) engaging in instrumental play (90% or 19/21: 80% or 8/10); (3) recreating a tune they know (71% or 15/21: 50% or 5/10); as well as (4) creating their own music (62% or 13/21: 50% or 5/10). Reception teachers who had been in receipt of music CPD were more likely to observe children engaging in instrumental play (95% or 20/21: 78% or 14/18) and recreating tunes they know (95% or 20/21: 78% or 14/18), than those who have not experienced music CPD. No discernible differences were noted for the musically accomplished respondents on the topic of teacher observations of child-initiated musical play.

In pursuit of possible inference potential to a wider population, the Fisher's Exact test was applied to the data that were compatible with the bifold (2 x 2) contingency table requirements. This included the second participant variable 'Period Trained', previously recoded to form two categories ('longer ago': trained in the 1970s/1980s and 'more recent': trained in the 2000/2010s). On the subject of respondent observation of child-initiated technological music play, the two-sided Fisher's Exact test reported a significant p-value of 0.021, indicating that more recently trained teachers were statistically less likely to observe technological music play in the Reception classroom than their more experienced colleagues.

Four main themes emerged from the data in response to the first research question, on the subject of the nature of the musical activities taking place in the Reception classroom. First, the participant variable profile of the Reception teacher who was most likely to engage in musical activities as part of the daily routine implies the following attributes: (1) age specific (EYFS) initial teacher education (ITE); (2) recently trained; and (3) a non-musician. One statistically significant indicator illustrating an aspect of this profile is presented by the results from applying the Mann-Whitney U test. This reports that more recently trained teachers (n=21) were more likely to encourage listening to recorded music as a carpet time activity (U = 152; p = 0.48). The implication is that the differences in responses by the period in which the respondents were trained could be indicative of a trend within the wider population of EYFS teachers. An intriguing finding, worthy of further deliberation, references the notion that the self-identifying musically accomplished Reception teachers were less likely to incorporate musical activities in the daily routine.

The second theme reports that musical activities were regularly used to scaffold learning across the areas. The representative teacher profile for this aspect relates to the following participant variables: age specific ITE, trained `longer ago`, CPD experienced and self-identified as `musicians`. Particularly high scores were noted for employing music as a means to facilitate learning in Literacy (82%) and Numeracy (85%). However, the most surprising finding was the lowest score for PSED (56%). Singing and vocal activities were the predominant musical resource drawn upon to scaffold learning across the curriculum. A closer view of the data revealed that EYFS trained Reception teachers were the most likely to use musical activities to scaffold learning for both the Prime and Specific areas of the curriculum. Conversely, the more experienced Reception teachers suggested that they were less likely to use musical activities overall to scaffold learning, except for PSED. A finding of interest concerns the use of musical activities to scaffold learning in both Communication and Language as well as Literacy, reported by both the CPD experienced teachers as well as the accomplished musicians. Two statistically significant findings relate to the more experienced Reception teachers. First, this group were more likely to use instruments/soundmakers to support learning in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Fisher Test; p-value of 0.019) and second, that the experienced teachers were more likely to include music I.T. to support the children's learning (2-sided Fisher's Exact test;  $p = 0.024$ ).

The third theme concerning the nature of musical activities in the Reception classroom references the provision of resources to stimulate musical play. Children could access a sound area every day in 3:4 classrooms and instruments were available to play only in 56% classrooms every day. (Of note, both of these opportunities were less likely in the classroom those identifying themselves as a musician). No consistent patterns in the respect of EYFS trained respondents, nor length of experience were observed, although the more experienced teachers were more likely to provide an audio player and a computer/iPad every day to stimulate musical play. Notably, the survey respondents who had engaged in music CPD appeared to be less likely to provide resources for children to engage in musical activities on a daily basis. As noted above the most intriguing findings pertain to the `musicians` group of Reception teachers who appeared less likely than their counterparts to provide a `sound` area, nor soundmakers for children to engage in musical play every day.

The final theme, responding to the first research question, comprises teacher observations of children`s self-initiated music making. Broadly two thirds of the teachers had observed some or most children singing whilst engaged in child-initiated learning most days. Every teacher had observed children engaged in instrumental play, but half commented that this took place on most days. It was more common for EYFS trained respondents to observe most children singing whilst playing, as well as recreating tunes. CPD experienced Reception teachers were also more likely to observe children engaging in instrumental play as well as recreating tunes. No discernible differences were noted for the musically accomplished Reception teacher. Of interest is the statistically significant result for the more recently trained, rather than the more experienced respondent, to have observed technological music play in the Reception classroom (2-sided Fisher`s Exact test p-value = 0.021). An equal mix of boys and girls prevailed with regard to the Reception teacher`s observations of gender preferences for almost all the musical activities. Supporting evidence for this finding include mixed participation for the activities of singing and dancing (54%); instrumental play (7%); recreating melodies (72%) and creating original music (64%). However, a slight skew was noted towards girls for singing and dancing (44%) and creating their own music (26%).

To sum, four key findings addressing the first research question were taken forward for further discussion. These comprised: (1) the profile of the Reception teacher who was most likely to engage in musical activities (age specific ITE, recently trained, non-musician), conversely, the self-identifying `musician` being the `least likely`; (2) musical activities were particularly used to scaffold learning in Communication and Language, as well as Literacy; (3) the notion that musical activities were least likely to scaffold learning in PSED; (4) access to a `sound` area and the provision of resources to stimulate musical play were less likely in classrooms of both the respondents who had engaged in music CPD, as well as the self-identifying `musicians` group of Reception teachers.

## 9.4 Planning for musical learning and development

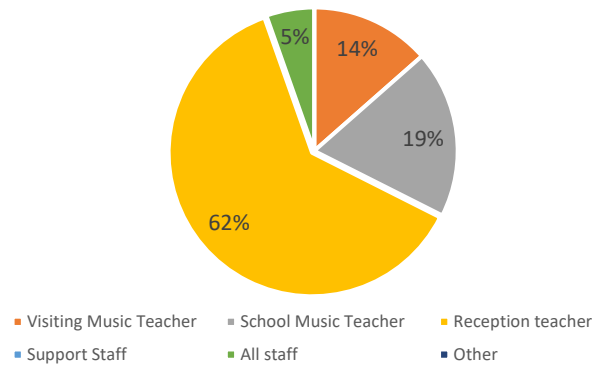
The second section of the questionnaire centred on the teacher activities of planning and assessment for musical learning and development in order to respond the second research question `How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the

Reception class?’ The two groups of questions explored issues such as staffing, curricular frameworks, as well as planning, leading and modelling musical learning. The assessment and recording group of questions delved into formative and summative approaches to the assessment process, as well as how children’s musical achievements might be recorded.

#### 9.4.1 Curriculum planning

The Reception teachers were consulted with regard to the personnel involved in and/or responsible for leading and/or planning of the musical activities for the daily musical routine, Prime and Specific areas of the curriculum. The questions referenced both planning for child-initiated musical opportunities, as well as for the adult-led musical learning. The findings indicated that all the teachers and support staff were likely to be involved in leading the musical activities in the Reception classrooms where these were incorporated into the daily routine. In contrast, overwhelmingly, it was the responsibility of the class teachers to plan the musical activities to support the Prime and Specific areas of learning. It was relatively rare for support staff to be involved in this planning role, only two cases reported under the ‘all staff’ response category.

Responsibility for the planning and delivery of the adult-led musical component of the Expressive Arts and Design specific area of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum tended to lie with the Reception teachers in three fifths (61%) of cases, as illustrated in Figure 9.18. Although, sometimes, a specialist school member of staff (21%) or, less often, a visiting music Teacher (13%) fulfilled this role.



**Figure 9.18:** The staff responsible for leading the musical learning.

A slightly contrasting picture emerged when the respondents were also asked to reflect on the planning and preparation of the stimuli and resources needed for the child-initiated musical learning activities. The teachers were responsible for this in almost 3:4 (72%) Reception classes, whilst for 25% cases (1:4), it was both the teaching and support staff who shared this role of creating a playful musical environment for learning.

Questions on the subject of a curriculum framework and assessment procedures were incorporated into this section of the questionnaire. In terms of planning for musical learning and development, there was a fairly even split between those Reception teachers who followed a structured framework (44%) and those who did not (54%). For those who did follow a curriculum plan, it was more likely to be topic-based, rather than book or resource led. Of note is the statistically significant finding relating to the participant variable `Musically accomplished singer/instrumentalist`, cross referenced with the dependent variable resulting from the question `Do you follow a structured curriculum framework for musical learning and development?` The result suggests that the musically accomplished respondents (n=9:12) were statistically more likely to follow a structured curriculum framework for music than their counterparts (Fisher Test;  $p = 0.14$ ).

The four participant variables were compared for the 7 questions pertaining to the second research question on the subject of planning for music learning and development in the Reception class. EYFS trained respondents were less likely to plan

(59% or 13/22: 81% or 13/16) nor lead (64% or 14/22: 75% or 12/16) musical learning in the Reception classroom compared to their non EYFS trained counterparts. This was possibly due to the musical aspect of the Expressive Arts and Design learning area being taught by school or visiting music teachers in approximately double the cases (19% or 3/16: 41% or 9/22]. No significant patterns emerged when comparing the EYFS trained/non trained teacher with respect to leading the routine, nor planning and modelling the musical activities for the planning of prime and specific areas of learning.

Similarly, no significant differences were reported by the more or less experienced teachers with regard to who led the routine classroom musical activities, nor who planned and modelled the musical activities to scaffold learning in the Prime and Specific areas of the curriculum. However, for reasons noted above, it was more likely for the most experienced Reception teachers in the survey (80% or 8/10), rather than the least (57% or 12/21), to plan, lead and model musical learning for EAD.

No patterns emerged when tracking CPD as the participant variable with regard to planning, leading and modelling musical activities. Similarly, no significant trends were noted for the accomplished musician in the survey in respect of planning the musical activities for the Prime and Specific areas of the curriculum. However, the survey respondents indicated that the musical accomplished Reception teachers were more likely to plan, model and lead the music component of EAD, than their counterparts (83% or 10/12: 62% or 16/26).

#### 9.4.2 Recording and Assessment

Music is incorporated within the Early Learning Goal for Expressive Arts and Design in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DFE, 2017). The second group of questions responding to the second research question was concerned with how Reception teachers record and assess the children`s musical learning and development. The musical achievements of the children were recorded in 4:5 cases, with 25% of Reception teachers also noting that they used an EYFS specific online scheme (mostly `Tapestry`<sup>22</sup>, an interactive online learning journal) for this purpose. Almost all of the respondents (36:39, 92%) indicated that a key element in the recording process was providing photographic and video evidence, which might be uploaded online. This visual/audio means of recording musical accomplishments was

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<sup>22</sup> Retrieved from: <https://tapestry.info/>



accompanied by written commentaries in an overwhelming 95% (37:39) of cases. At the same time, three quarters of the respondents also indicated that they used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements. Nine out of ten Reception teachers reported that they used these records of achievement for summative reporting, whilst a slightly smaller proportion (82%) suggested that these records were used for formative purposes, in other words, planning for further musical learning and development. Almost all (95%) respondents reported that they matched their observations with the `Ages and Stages of Development` referenced in the National Guidance.

Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, a comparison of responses by the EYFS trained participant variable with regard to the recording and assessment group of questions suggests a slight bias towards EYFS trained teachers engaging in these activities, as illustrated by the figures in Table 9.8.

**Table 9.8:** Recording musical achievements & the EYFS trained teacher.

	<b>EYFS trained</b>	<b>Non EYFS trained</b>
Yes, children`s musical achievements are recorded	82% (18:22)	71% (12:17)
Yes, musical achievements are recorded using video/photographs	95% (21:22)	88% (15:17)
Yes, musical observations are written up as comments	100% (22/22)	88% (15:17)
Yes, music records are used for formative planning	86% (19/22)	76% (13:17)
Yes, music records are used for summative reporting	91% (20/22)	88% (15:17)

Similarly, significant differences were not noted between the most and least experienced respondent Reception teachers on the subject of assessment and recording. More experienced Reception teachers in the survey were slightly more likely to record children`s musical achievements than their counterparts. Two findings are highlighted. First, the more experienced respondents indicated that they were more likely to record children`s musical achievements (80% or 8/10: 67% or 14/21) and second, that this group were also more likely to use the assessment process to formatively plan further musical development than their less experienced colleagues (100% or 10/10: 81% or 17/21).

A mixed picture is presented by cross referencing the responses of the independent CPD variable with the set of questions on the topic of assessment, recording and reporting. This is illustrated by comparing and contrasting two responses. Firstly, those teachers who had experienced CPD were more likely to record children`s musical achievements (83% or 15/18: 71% or 15/21). Yet on the other hand, these participants who had experienced CPD were less likely to employ these records for formative purposes (72% or 13/19: 91% or 19/21).

The survey responses from the musically accomplished Reception teachers, on the other hand, indicated that they were more likely to record children`s musical achievements; used an in-house scheme for recording assessments; used video and used the comments for summative recording purposes than their less musically confident counterparts. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, the figures in Table 9.9 illustrate this trend. Of note is the finding that musically accomplished respondents were less likely to use the records of achievement for formative, planning purposes to encourage further musical learning and development.

**Table 9.9:** Recording musical achievements & the musically accomplished teacher.

	<b>Musician</b>	<b>Non musician</b>
Yes, children`s musical achievements are recorded	92% (11:12)	70% (19:27)
An in-house scheme is used to record achievements	75% (9:12)	41% (11:27)
Yes, musical achievements are recorded using video/photographs	100% (12:12)	89% (24:27)
Yes, music records are used for formative planning	74% (9:12)	85% (23:27)
Yes, music records are used for summative reporting	100% (12:12)	85% (23:27)

The final question of this sub-section was in the form of a long answer question to elicit a more detailed understanding of the pertinent issues regarding observations, recording and assessment. When asked for further comment on planning for continued musical learning and development for individual children, the Reception teachers mentioned the notions of long and short observations (16 comments); following children`s interests and ideas (11); looking for gaps in knowledge and plotting `next steps` (8); and finally referenced `Development Matters` (Early Education, 2012) for

guidance on the `Ages and Stages of Development` (7 comments). The long answers to this question were thematically analysed to create subgroups of related responses. A full tally chart, Table 9.10, is given below. Figure 9.19 provides a visual representation of the responses to the open-ended question on the subject of planning for musical learning and development.

**Table 9.10: Tally chart: Observing and planning for further musical learning.**

Thematically grouped, long answer responses	No. of references
Long and short observations	17
Following children`s ideas and interests (addressing disinterests)	12
Noting gaps and plotting `next steps`	11
Checking against ages and stages of development/COEL*	8
Stimulus from topic/ Music Express scheme/Pinterest	6
Record and track individual learning using software programmes	7
Target focus group	4
`Post it` note records	3
Children are not assessed formally	3
Adult-led input	3
Feedback, modelling, differentiate and extension suggestions	1 each

\*CoEL<sup>23</sup> refers to the characteristics of learning in the EYFS curriculum.



**Figure 9.19:** Teachers` responses to the open-ended question on the subject of planning for learning and development.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <http://eyfs.info/articles.html/teaching-and-learning/characteristics-of-effective-learning-play-and-exploration-in-action-r160/>

<sup>24</sup> Generated via <https://wordart.com/create>

Further comments made by the respondents conclude this section on recording and assessment. One Teacher summed the cyclical recording and planning process:

Observations are used to record individual children's achievements and plot out their 'next steps': their ideas are incorporated into the planning for use by the wider group who would also benefit from carrying out similar activities (Anon).

A contrasting comment was made by another respondent:

We do not use observations of musical learning to inform our planning. We plan what fits in with our topic ideas (Anon).

The recording and planning process, using an alternative online scheme *'2Build a Profile'*<sup>25</sup> iPad software application, was described by a third teacher:

Observations are made and recorded using the *'2Build a Profile iPad App'*. This is linked to *'Classroom Monitor'* which assesses attainment against the ages and stages of development. Tracking progress using this, I am able to target next steps for individual learners (Anon).

*'Classroom Monitor'*<sup>26</sup> is an online formative assessment tool, used by primary schools for tracking pupil tracking pupil progress.

A fourth respondent noted:

We respond to individuals through immediate feedback, modelling and suggestions to extend them. We could do more in terms of an observation and planning cycle specifically for music! (Anon).

A number of themes emerged from the data in response to the second research question on the subject of planning, as well as observing and recording musical learning and development in the Reception classroom. First, that it was the Reception class teacher's responsibility to plan the musical activities for the prime and specific learning areas. No trends emerged when comparing any of the four independent variables with respect to leading the routine, nor planning and modelling the musical activities for the planning of prime and specific areas of learning. Second, musical learning for EAD was also largely prepared, modelled and led by the Reception teacher, except in the third of schools where an in-house or visiting music specialist teacher fulfilled this role. Of interest is the finding that it was twice as likely for a visiting or school music teacher to plan the musical aspect of the Expressive arts and design learning area (EAD) in schools with EYFS trained teachers. Also, it was more likely for

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<sup>25</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.2simple.com/2buildaprofile>

<sup>26</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.classroommonitor.co.uk/>

the most experienced, as well as the musically accomplished Reception teachers to plan, lead and model musical learning for EAD.

Third, in terms of planning for musical learning and development, there was a fairly even split between those Reception teachers who followed a structured framework (44%) and those who did not (54%). For those who did follow a curriculum plan, it was more likely to be topic-based, rather than book or resource led. Of note on this topic is the statically significant finding that the musically accomplished respondents (n=9:12) more likely to follow a structured curriculum framework for music than their counterparts (2-sided Fisher`s Exact test;  $p = 0.14$ ).

With regard to observing and recording musical achievements, it is interesting to note that firstly, completing this task was reported by 4:5 Reception teachers, thus twenty per cent claimed they did not record children`s music making. Further investigation by cross tabulation analyses revealed a slight bias toward EYFS trained teachers engaging in this task. Moreover, the more experienced respondents were more likely to record children`s musical achievements than their counterparts. An interesting finding notes that this group of teachers was also more likely to use the assessment process to formatively plan further musical development than their less experienced colleagues. A mixed overview is presented by cross tabulating these two notions with the independent CPD variable. Firstly, those teachers who had experienced CPD were more likely to record children`s musical achievements, Yet, on the other hand, this group were less likely to employ these records for formative purposes. Similarly, a noteworthy finding references the musically accomplished respondents who were also less likely to use the records of achievement for formative, planning purposes to encourage further musical learning and development.

In contrast, almost all the Reception teachers recorded the children`s musical achievements using video and/or photographs, as well as written comments describing their observations. Moreover, one in four respondents used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements. Finally, 4:5 Reception teachers stated that they used their music observations to inform their planning (mostly EYFS trained, with CPD experience), whilst a minority group (18%) did not.

To sum, a number of the key findings were taken forward for further discussion in response to the second research question. These comprised: (1) the most experienced, as well as the musically accomplished Reception teachers were most

likely to plan, lead and model musical learning. Of interest is the finding that it was twice as likely for a visiting or school music teacher to plan the musical learning in schools with EYFS trained teachers; (2) Nearly half (44%) of the Respondents followed a structured framework for planning musical learning – although it was more likely to be topic led, rather than based on a book scheme; (3) Musically accomplished Respondents were statistically more likely to follow a structured music curriculum framework than their counterparts (2-sided Fisher`s Exact test;  $p = 0.14$ ); (4) 80% (4:5) Reception teachers claimed they did not record children`s musical achievement. The profile for those who were more likely to, included the more experienced teachers as well as those who were in receipt of music CPD; (5) The former group of more experienced teachers were also more likely to use the formative assessment process for planning children`s further musical development. Whilst the more musically accomplished respondents were less likely to use achievement records in this way; (6) Almost all the Reception teachers used video and/or photographs, as well as written comments to describe and record their observations of children`s musical achievements. Of note, was the finding that one in four respondents also used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements.

## 9.5 Musical identity and confidence

The Reception teachers were invited to consider their musical identity in respect of their levels of confidence with regard to leading, modelling and planning for musical learning. This self-reflective process, in response to the third research question, was extended to include a range of pedagogical activities. Respondents reflected on their confidence and understanding of musical progression, differentiation, assessment, supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as recognising and developing gifted and talented children (G&T).

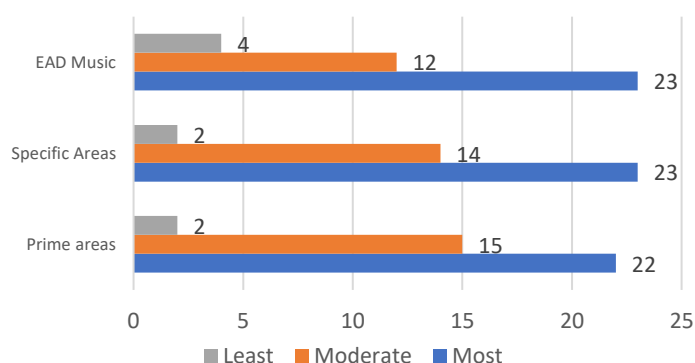
### 9.5.1 Teacher musical identity

In the respect of leading and modelling musical activities with their classes, just over two thirds (27:39, 69%) of the respondents did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists. Nevertheless, with the exception of one, all respondents felt confident to lead and/or model singing activities in their reception class. Over three quarters of the teachers (30:39, 77%) felt they had sufficient musical

knowledge to successfully engage in singing activities, although, slightly less (26:39, 69%) exhibited the same confidence with leading and/or modelling instrumental activities.

### 9.5.2 Teacher confidence

The questionnaire respondents were invited to measure their perceived levels of confidence with regard to a series of pedagogical activities using a `five point` Likert scale. The Reception teachers were generally quite confident about leading and modelling musical activities, such as singing and instrumental play. Slightly lower levels of confidence (56%; 59% and 59%) were reported for planning musical activities for the prime and specific areas of learning, as well as for the musical component of Expressive Arts and Design. Although it must be noted that moderate levels of confidence (39%; 36% and 31%) were indicated by some respondents for planning for these three areas. These data are illustrated in Figure 9.20.



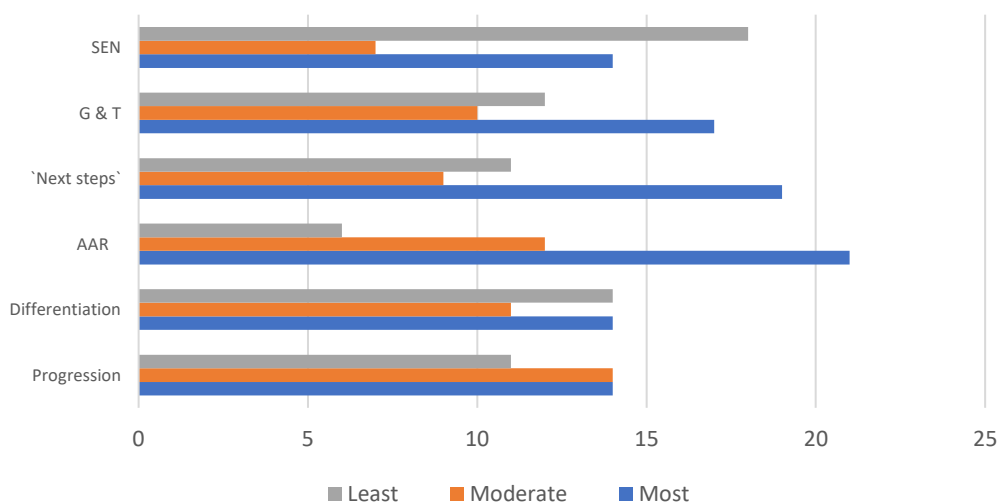
**Figure 9.20:** Teacher confidence in planning musical activities for the Prime, Specific & EAD music areas.

Although teachers were generally confident about planning musical opportunities for their classes, they acknowledged that the same level of confidence does not extend to the activities of progression and differentiation. In nearly two thirds of cases (25:39, 64%), respondents reported moderate or less confidence in planning for sequential musical learning or planning appropriate musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children in their reception classes. In contrast, a higher proportion of Reception teachers expressed moderate or greater confidence in assessing and reporting (33:39, 85%), as well as providing `next steps` guidance (28:39, 72%) for the children in their

class. However, these numbers dropped slightly when asked about their confidence to identify, develop and support children who are musically gifted and talented (27:39, 69%) or for those with special educational needs and disabilities (21:39, 54%). One respondent added a comment to sum their view on this area:

I feel that I would benefit from further training as this isn't an area that I personally am most confident to teach (Anon).

Figure 9.21 compares teacher confidence across the pedagogical areas of planning for musical progression; `next steps`; differentiation; assessment and recording; as well as supporting children with special needs including `gifted and talented` pupils.



**Figure 9.21:** Teacher confidence in relation to the pedagogical activities relevant to musical learning and development.

On closer inspection, the analytical response segmentation process revealed that the EYFS trained respondents considered themselves less confident than their counterparts in the respect of the majority of musical pedagogical activities. Yet this picture is reversed for the aspect of differentiation. Whilst not statistically significant on the basis of a Mann-Whitney U test, this overview is presented in Table 9.11.



**Table 9.11:** Confidence perceptions of EYFS trained teachers and music pedagogy

	<b>EYFS trained</b>	<b>Non EYFS trained</b>
Feel `somewhat` confident to plan musical activities for the prime areas	32% (7:22)	53% (9:17)
Feel `somewhat` confident to plan musical activities for the specific areas	41% (9:22)	47% (8:17)
Feel `somewhat` confident to plan EAD musical activities	36% (8:22)	59% (10:17)
Feel `slightly` confident to differentiate musical learning	32% (7:22)	24% (4:17)
Feel `slightly` confident to plan for progression in music	32% (7:22)	41% (7:17)
Feel `somewhat` confident to assess & record musical achievements	41% (9:22)	47% (8:17)
Feel `somewhat` confident to plan the `next steps` in music	32% (7:22)	47% (8:17)

The more experienced teachers in this survey reported greater confidence than their more recently trained counterparts for the three planning areas, prime, specific and music. This is demonstrated by the proportionately higher response to feeling `somewhat` confident for planning musical activities (70% or 7/10: 43% or 10/21). This trend is also observed across the pedagogical activities of assessing, planning `next steps`, as well as supporting children with educational needs, illustrated by the `somewhat` confident response duplicated for both the assessing and `next steps` questions (60% or 6/10: 29% or 8/21). However, of note, is the reversed trend observed for differentiating musical activities and planning for progression. The most experienced teachers in the survey reported that they were less confident than their counterparts on this topic, illustrated by their `slightly` confident response for planning for progression (30% or 3/10: 47% or 10/21). Reception teachers who had experienced music CPD considered themselves to be `somewhat` more confident to plan musical activities (52% or 11/21: 39% or 7/18); plan for progression (38% or 8/21: 33% or 6/18); and assess musical achievement (52% or 11/21: 33% or 6/18), than those colleagues who had not experienced music in-service education and training (INSET).

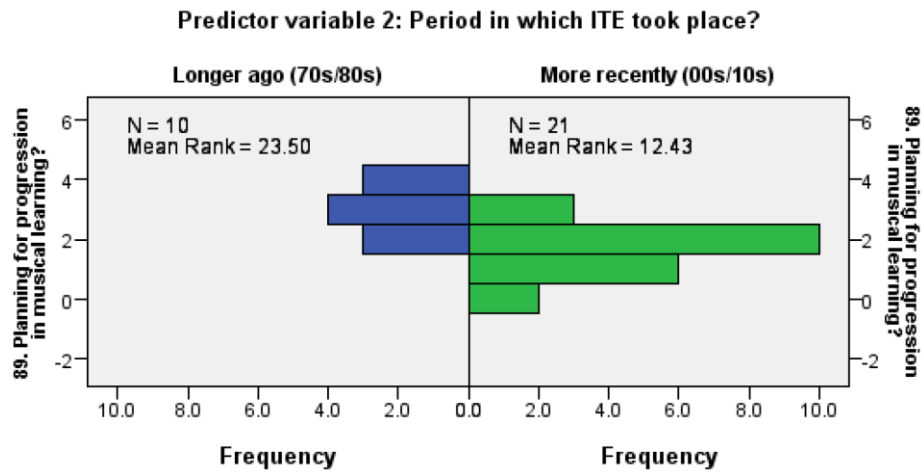
Interpreting the segmentation of the responses by the independent `Musician` variable proved to be a more complex task due to the nature of the ranked responses. On first view the findings indicated that the musical respondents demonstrated less confidence than their counterparts in a number of areas, planning for EAD musical learning and development being a case in point. The responses from 42% (5:12) of the musicians

reported feeling 'somewhat' confident in this respect as compared to 48% (13:27) of their colleagues. However, on closer inspection, the data reveals that 50% (6:12) of the musicians considered themselves to be 'moderately' confident to plan this aspect of the EYFS curriculum. Similar patterns were noted for planning for progression, differentiating musical learning, as well as supporting musically gifted and talented children. Closer examination of the 'least' confident response category reveals the two areas of differentiating musical activities (25% or 3/12 Musicians: 26% or 7/27 Colleagues) as well as supporting children with SEND (33% or 4/12 Musicians: 30% or 8/27 Colleagues) to be of prime concern for both groups of Reception teachers.

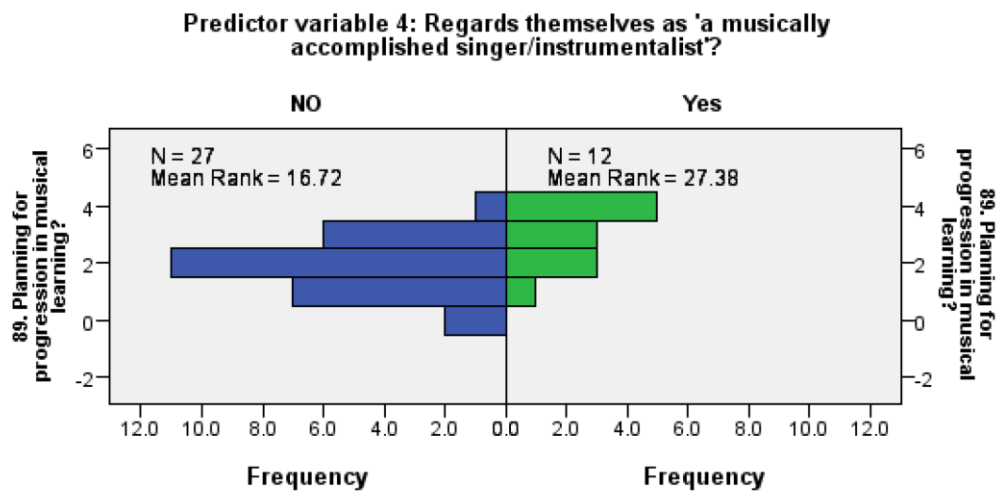
Inferential analyses were undertaken by cross referencing the participant variable 'Musically accomplished singer/instrumentalist' (n=12) with all four dependent variables. Two findings proved significant, that of 'musically confident to lead/model singing activities in class' and 'musically confident to lead/model instrumental activities in class'. Statistically significant results were noted further to applying the two-sided Fisher's Exact test. P-values of 0.036 for singing and 0.003 for instrumental activities were reported, confirming that the musically accomplished respondents expressed greater levels of confidence for these activities.

Further noteworthy findings include two sets of statistically significant results, confirmed by applying the Mann-Whitney test to the group of questions on the subject of teacher confidence, cross referenced with first: the 'Decade' and second: the 'Musician' participant variables. The purpose was to discover, in each case, which group of teachers (most/least experienced; non/musician) would be found with the highest mean rank. The data, collated in Tables 9.12 and 9.13 demonstrate that: (1) Reception teachers trained in the 2000s and 2010s, rather than their more experienced colleagues, reported greater confidence to plan a range of pedagogical music activities. (2) A converse set of results was observed for the Reception teachers who regarded themselves as musically accomplished, in that they were less confident in this respect. Two exemplar Figures (9.22 and 9.23) are included to illustrate these statistically significant results, with the added implication that these findings may be representative of the larger populations of both experienced and musical Reception teachers in the East Midlands. The theme 'developing musical learning', an underpinning focus of this research study, was selected to illustrate this comparison. From the tabulated data for these exemplar, it can be concluded that the more recently trained Reception teachers' (2000s/2010s) expression of greater confidence to plan for progression in musical

learning and development was of higher statistical significance than that of the more experienced teachers ( $U=30$ ;  $p= 0.001$ ;  $n=21:10$ ). Conversely, the `musicians` expressed less confidence than the `non-musicians` in the respect of planning for musical progression. A result of statistical significance between the two sets of ranked means is recorded ( $U=250.5$ ;  $p= 0.006$ ;  $n=12:27$ ).



**Figure 9.22:** Teacher confidence in respect of progressing musical learning and development by decade.



**Figure 9.23:** Non/Musician confidence in respect of progressing musical learning and development.

**Tables 9.12 & 9.13:** Mann-Whitney U Test summary analyses

<b>Table 9.12</b> (n=10:21)	Decade	Mean rank	U	P
Prime areas	1970s`80s	23.90	26.0	.000
	2000s`10s	12.24		
Specific areas	1970s`80s	22.70	38.0	.004
	2000s`10s	12.81		
EAD music	1970s`80s	22.50	40.0	.005
	2000s`10s	12.90		
Progression	1970s`80s	23.50	30.0	.001
	2000s`10s	12.43		
Differentiation	1970s`80s	23.05	34.5	.002
	2000s`10s	12.64		
Assess & record	1970s`80s	22.85	36.5	.003
	2000s`10s	12.74		
Next steps	1970s`80s	22.80	37.0	.003
	2000s`10s	12.76		
G &T	1970s`80s	22.75	37.5	.003
	2000s`10s	12.79		
SEND	1970s`80s	24.00	25.0	.000
	2000s`10s	12.19		

<b>Table 9.13</b> (n=12:27) [Musician/Non]	Musician	Mean rank	U	P
Prime areas	Yes	28.75	267.0	.001
	No	16.11		
Specific areas	Yes	27.42	251.0	.006
	No	16.70		
EAD music	Yes	27.88	256.5	.003
	No	16.50		
Progression	Yes	27.38	250.5	.006
	No	16.72		
Differentiation	Yes	26.17	236.0	.024
	No	17.26		
Assess & record	Yes	26.25	237.0	.022
	No	17.22		
Next steps	Yes	28.21	260.5	.002
	No	16.35		
G &T	Yes	27.21	248.0	.007
	No	16.8		

A number of themes emerged from the data in response to the third research question exploring teacher`s perceptions of their confidence with regard to planning and facilitating musical learning and development. Just over two thirds (69%) of the Reception teachers did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists. However, with the exception of one, all respondents felt confident to lead and/or model singing activities with their Reception class. Although the Reception teachers were generally quite confident about leading and modelling both singing and instrumental play, they expressed slightly lower levels of confidence on the topics of planning musical activities for the prime and specific areas of learning, as well as for the musical component of Expressive Arts and Design. Reported levels of confidence further decreased when questioned about planning for progression and differentiation in music. In contrast, a higher proportion of Reception teachers expressed moderate or greater confidence in assessing and reporting, as well as providing `next steps` guidance for the children in their class. Conversely, levels of confidence decreased slightly when asked about their confidence to identify, develop and support children who are musically Gifted and Talented or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Further cross tabulated analyses of these data sets noted that the more experienced teachers reported greater confidence for the three planning areas, prime, specific and EAD music. This trend is also observed across the pedagogical activities of assessing, planning `next steps` as well as supporting children with educational needs. Of note, is the reversed trend for differentiating musical activities and planning for progression. No marked differences on this topic were noted for the remaining participant variables.

Findings of statistical significance for Reception teachers trained in the 2000s and 2010s, as well as those respondents who regarded themselves as musically accomplished were confirmed further to applying the Mann-Whitney U test. Recently trained colleagues reported greater confidence to plan a range of pedagogical music activities ( $U=30$ ;  $p= 0.001$ ;  $n=21:10$ ). Conversely, the Reception teachers who regarded themselves as musically accomplished, were less confident in this respect ( $U=250.5$ ;  $p= 0.006$ ;  $n=12:27$ ). The implication of these statistically significant findings, requiring further investigation, is that they may be representative of the larger populations of both experienced and musical Reception teachers in the East Midlands.

To sum, a number of key findings addressing the third research question were taken forward for further discussion. These comprised: (1) over two thirds (69%) of the

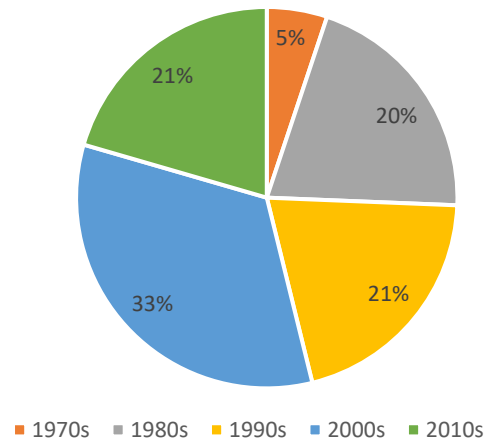
Respondents did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists. However, with the exception of one, all respondents felt confident to lead and/or model singing activities. (2) Respondents expressed moderate or greater confidence in assessing and reporting, as well as providing `next steps` guidance, as compared to slightly lower levels for planning. (3) Least confident pedagogical activities included planning for progression and differentiation in music, as well as the confidence to musically develop and support children identified as G&T or SEND. (4) The more experienced teachers reported greater confidence for planning, assessment (including `next steps`), as well as supporting children with educational needs. Of note for this group, is the reversed trend for differentiating musical activities and planning for progression. (5) Two statistically significant findings pertaining to the more recently trained Reception teachers (2000s/2010s), as well as the `musically accomplished` group, were confirmed further to applying the Mann Whitney U test. The former reported greater confidence to plan a range of pedagogical music activities - yet the latter considered themselves less confident in this respect.

## 9.6 Initial teacher education and Continuing professional development

The fourth research question sought to learn the views of the respondents with regard to their initial teacher education (ITE) experience, opportunities and continuing professional development (CPD), as well as perceived need for further music in-service education and training (INSET).

### 9.6.1 Initial teacher education

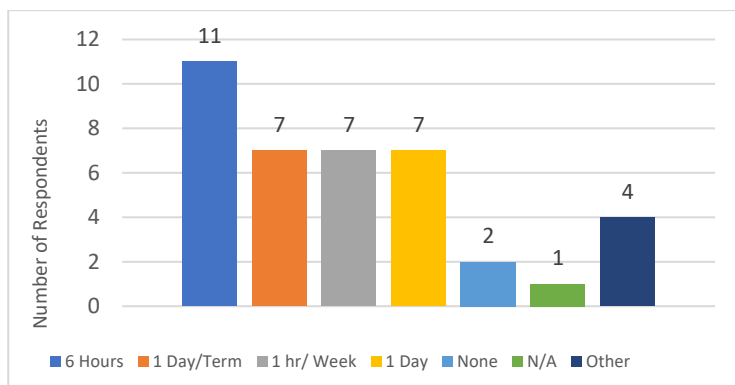
Routes into teaching children of Reception Year age were explored with questions concerned with the type of qualifications gained, when training occurred, as well as the age range selected for initial training. Just over half of the respondents (56%) trained specifically to teach children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. One in five (21%) completed their initial teacher education (ITE) recently, in the current decade and a further third between the years 2000 and 2009. Just under half (46%) were engaged in their initial professional training in the 1990s or earlier. These data are presented in Figure 9.24.



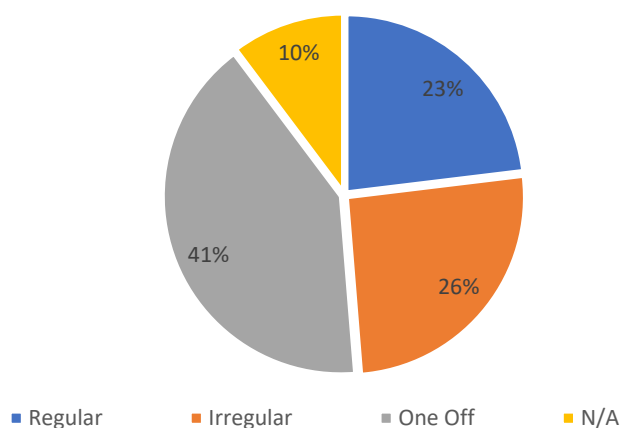
**Figure 9.24:** Reception teacher pre-service education era.

In terms of their professional qualifications, the data indicates that the majority (77%) of respondents followed an undergraduate route to qualifying with teacher status, whereas a minority (23%) undertook a Post Graduate Certificate of Education qualification (PGCE) further to their first degree.

Despite a bias toward education focused undergraduate studies, nearly two thirds of the Reception teachers reported that the musical component of their professional training was either absent (16:39, 41%) or of poor quality (9:39, 23%). Less than one quarter (9:39, 23%) reported that the music input was good or excellent. Similarly, where provision was made for music in the course of the undergraduate studies, this tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience (16:39, 41%), as opposed to being provided on a regular basis. Twenty-six per cent (10:39) of the respondents noted the `irregular` nature of the musical ITE input. Figures 9.25 and 9.26 present a summary of the total music input, with the frequency of the teaching sessions during ITE.



**Figure 9.25:** Initial teacher education: Total music input.



**Figure 9.26:** `Best fit` description of frequency of ITE music input.

The two-sided Fisher's Exact test was applied to the second participant variable `Period trained`, cross referenced with the dependent variable `ITE input experience`. The description of the ITE music input by the more recently trained Reception teachers (2000s, 2010s) as a `one off` experience, rather than delivered `on a regular basis` has a reported p-value of 0.08. This statistically significant finding has the potential to be generalised to the wider population of Reception teachers in the East Midlands.

A second finding of significance resulted from analysing the `Period trained` participant variable, cross referenced with the `musically accomplished` Reception teacher. The two-sided Fisher's Exact test reported a p-value of 0.015 indicating that the musically accomplished singer and/or instrumentalists were statistically more likely to have been



trained in the 1970s and 1980s rather than more recently. An interesting finding, when considered in the context of the investment in national initiatives such as Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET). This theme will be pursued in the next chapters.

A small number of Reception teachers responded to the question regarding further accredited EYFS study. From this minority (6/39, 15%), it was reported that music was rarely represented at this higher level of study (1:39). Nevertheless, just over half (54%) of respondents have undertaken further professional development training that incorporated music. These in-service training opportunities were most likely to be provided `in house` (in school), or out of school by the local authority.

### 9.6.2 Continuing professional development

Ninety per cent of participants (35:39) would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development. When asked to identify a particular area of interest, or perceived need, the respondents indicated a variety of aspects, which have been grouped into the following areas: ideas, planning, differentiation and progression, resources and techniques, cross-curricular, assessment and staff related. See Table 9.14 below.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>No. of references</b>
Ideas	8
Planning, differentiation & progression	5
Resources and techniques	5
Cross-curricular	3
Assessment	1
Staff Related	1

Figure 9.27 provides a visual representation of the responses to the open-ended question on the subject of their perceived need for music learning and development CPD.



qualifications, a proportion of broadly 3:1 (77%: 23%) describes the ratio of Reception teachers who followed an undergraduate route to qualifying with teacher status, in contrast to those who undertook (PGCE) following their first degree; (2) Just over half of the respondents (56%) trained specifically to teach children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; (3) Just under half (46%) of the Reception teachers completed their initial professional training in the 1990s or earlier; and (4) one in five (21%) completed their initial teacher education (ITE) more recently, in the current decade.

Despite, a bias toward education focused undergraduate studies, nearly two thirds of the Reception teachers reported that the musical component of their professional training was either absent (16:39, 41%) or of poor quality (9:39, 23%). Less than one quarter (9:39, 23%) reported that the music input was good or excellent. Similarly, where provision was made for music in the course of the undergraduate studies, this tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience (16:39, 41%). It is interesting to note that 40% (4:10) of the more experienced Reception teachers in this survey were less likely to describe the music input to their initial teacher education as poor, as compared to 52% (11:21) of their more recently trained colleagues.

Statistically significant findings on the subject of Initial Teacher Education provided two noteworthy points of interest to be explored further. First, that more recently trained teachers reported the music input to be as a `one off` experience, rather than delivered `on a regular basis`. Second that the musically accomplished singer and/or instrumentalists were statistically more likely to have been trained in the 1970s and 1980s, rather than more recently.

Further to the response segmentation process, 64% (14:22) of the EYFS trained respondents reported that they were more likely to have engaged in further musical professional development than their colleagues. Ninety per cent of participants (35:39) would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development.

To sum, a number of key findings addressing the fourth research question taken forward for further discussion. These comprised: (1) three quarters (77%) of the Reception teachers followed an undergraduate route to qualifying with teacher status (QTS), in contrast to the first degree and PGCE route; (2) Just over half of the Respondents (56%) trained specifically to teach children in the EYFS; (3) Two thirds of the Reception teachers reported that the musical component of their professional

training was either absent (16:39, 41%) or of poor quality (9:39, 23%). In contrast, less than one quarter (9:39, 23%) reported that the music input was good or excellent; (4) Undergraduate music input tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience (16:39, 41%); (5) It is interesting to compare and contrast the views of the more experienced Respondents, (40%) were less likely to describe their ITE music input as poor, as compared to 52% (11:21) of the more recently trained Respondents; (6) Two statistically significant ITE findings note that the more recently trained teachers reported their music input to be a `one off` experience. Second, that the self-identified musicians were more likely to have trained in the 1970s and 1980s, than more recently; (7) 64% (14:22) of the EYFS trained respondents reported that they were more likely to have engaged in further musical professional development than their colleagues; and (8) Ninety per cent of participants (35:39) would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development.

## 9.7 Summary

This phase of the research study sought to explore teacher`s confidence with regard to facilitating musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at school. The purpose of the questionnaire was to discover the depth and breadth, in other words the field of the enquiry, and second to help focus the themes for the interview guide. Three constraints must be noted in connection with the reliability of the questionnaire responses. First, that the field (n=39) of respondents comprised a very small sample, some of the descriptive findings may not be considered generalizable. Second, that the notion of a `social desirability response bias` (Robson, 2011; Aldridge & Levine, 2001), must be born in mind when considering the results. Finally, since only thirty-nine completed proformas were received from a `mail out` to five hundred Reception teachers, it must be recorded that it is likely that the response is skewed towards those respondents who were interested, enthusiastic and/or committed to musical learning and development in the Reception Year. For, as Villar (2008) notes:

Nonresponse bias is related to the decision to participate in a study and the differences between those who decide to cooperate and those from whom data are not gathered (Villar, 2008, online<sup>28</sup>).

This point is further illustrated by a written comment from one teacher, declaring, “Music is my passion!” (Anon).

This investigative questionnaire yielded a rich and comprehensive data set, offering a snapshot of a particular context at a certain point in time, which helped provide a broad canvas in preparation for the overlay of the more in-depth, explorative detail of the qualitative enquiry (Chapter 10). The semi-structured interview presented an opportunity for a more open, yet refined and reflective focus, with a view to adding an enhanced dimension when responding to the research questions concerning: (1) the nature of the musical activities taking place in the Reception class; (2) teacher`s planning for musical learning and development in the Reception class; (3) teacher confidence in facilitating progression in musical learning and development; and (4) the perceived need for further support and training in music. Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative strands of data from this research study, with the relevant bodies of research literature, will ensue in a discussion that will enable the data to be viewed from multiple perspectives, yet integrated into a coherent whole in order to answer the research questions (Chapter 11).

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<sup>28</sup> Retrieved from: <http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/encyclopedia-of-survey-research-methods/n486.xml>

## Chapter 10: Thematic analyses of the interviews

### 10.1 Introduction

This research study sought to explore teacher`s confidence with regard to facilitating musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at school. The purpose of the interviews was to delve into the themes emerging from the questionnaire responses, with a view to eliciting a wider breadth and greater depth of understanding of the phenomena in order to answer the four research questions stated in Chapter 8.1.

Narratives drawn from the thematic analyses of the interviews with eight Reception teachers and a further interview with a music School Leader in Education (DfE, 2014<sup>29</sup>) form the foundation of this chapter. All the participants` names have been anonymised. Several of the interviewees referenced a local, nationally recognised, Independent Music Education Consultant (IMEC), either as in-school mentor and colleague, or as a provider of music in-service training.

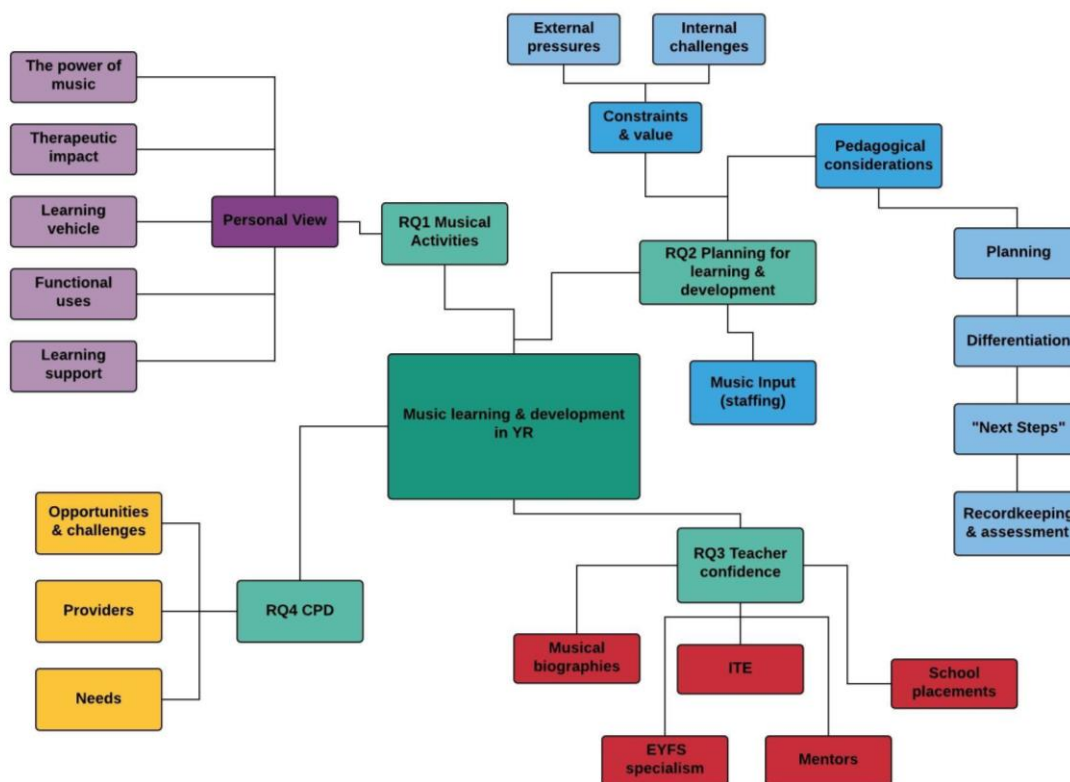
The interview participants were a `nested` subgroup (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007) from the quasi-purposive sample of self-selecting questionnaire respondents who accepted the invitation to interview (Appendix 6a). Drawn from three counties in the East Midlands, the school profiles of the eight interviewees ranged from small (100 pupils) to large schools (600+ pupils) on roll, located in areas which could be perceived as rural, semi-urban and urban. Given the fact that males are largely unrepresented in the early year`s workforce, efforts were made to secure an interview with at least one man. Unfortunately, this was not possible. The schools in which interviewees worked had varied, recorded indices of multiple deprivation and were representative of a variety of organisational status structures (local authority, academy, multi academy trust, independent). In other words, a broad cross-section of school contexts was represented (Appendix 9: Profiles of the school contexts and the interviewees 2015/2016). Similarly, the length of service of the Reception teachers, illustrated by the date of their initial teacher training (1970s to 2010s), demonstrated a range of experience.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/specialist-leaders-of-education-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>

The semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix 8) comprised three open-ended main themes. These invited the participants to share: (1) their experience as a Reception teacher; (2) their initial teacher education pathway; and also (3) the contribution of music to their daily life. A second tier of focused questions aligning more closely with the study research questions were posed. Further bespoke questions referenced issues arising from the individual questionnaire responses. These comprised such topic areas as: (a) general and music planning for the week; (b) planning for musical progression; and (c) recording and assessing individual musical learning.

Figure 10.1 provides a visual representation of the themes and subthemes resulting from the thematic analyses of the semi-structured interviews with the eight Reception teachers. A rigorous and thorough `verbatim` transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews preceded the search for patterns of meaning within the qualitative data set. Initial codes of interest were identified, relationships between codes considered and then combined to create overarching themes. Remaining 'close and true' to the data, the story emerging from this recursive and inductive process, as represented by the main themes and subthemes, was then mapped to the four research questions as illustrated by Figure 10.1.



**Figure 10.1** Mapping the emergent themes to the four research questions

The main themes distilled from the collective participants' qualitative stories comprised:

- (1) the therapeutic and transformative powers of music (the extrinsic value of music);
- (2) the internal and external barriers to incorporating regular opportunities for music teaching and learning in the Reception classroom;
- (3) the poor levels of pedagogical content knowledge demonstrated by limited practices of formative assessment, differentiation and progression in learning;
- (4) the rich musical personal biographies that did not translate into professional practice;
- (5) the arbitrary chances of good role models and mentors during formative school teacher placement experience.

## 10.2 Interviewees' personal views

The open-ended introductory interview questions sought to explore the Reception teachers' views on music education in the early years, the role of music in their lives, as well as their journey to teaching in the EYFS. The personal opinions and views of some of the interviewees provide the focus for this section, considering such notions as children's perceived innate musicality, and in particular how music can make a positive



impact on children with more complex learning needs. Descriptions of how music played a diverse, yet constant part in the daily routine of the Reception class follow. Finally, some Reception teachers comment on music as a vehicle for learning.

### 10.2.1 Children`s musicality

Two of the eight participants expressed their personal view with regard to children`s musicality from a global, class or individual perspective. Elizabeth suggested:

I think music education is important... [for] all children.... I value it for education because... I think very young children have some kind of innate music ability (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth reinforced this view by saying:

Just watching them over the years. I think it`s almost natural to them, because when they do pick up saucepans and spoons, some children do just bang them, but they very rarely just bang them ... it becomes a rhythm eventually, it becomes a pattern (Elizabeth).

Both Elizabeth and Frances commented on the impact music has on children: "You put music on and they behave differently" (Elizabeth). "I know my children are very musical, because the minute you put music on, they just change. They stand up, they want to perform" (Frances).

These two participants shared their reflections on individual children with differing needs. Frances commented:

I have a little girl who is quite quiet, but musically, rhythmically, you can see it in her body in how she moves ... (Frances).

Elizabeth expressed her concerns regarding children whom she identified as gifted and talented:

...those exceeding children, those children with the gift ... it`s more of a worry in music perhaps than other subjects, because every year I think you see children who exceed ... Where does it go? ... every year you think `When am I going to do something about this`? (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth went onto describe her experience of a recent superheroes project where two boys identified their own musical strengths and called themselves `Drum boy` and `Rockstar kid` as their alter egos. Elizabeth noted:

I usually have a boy who loves music... this year when they got to choose their alter ego, two of them chose a music skill... but he is a drum boy. He loves drumming ... There was another one, Rockstar kid. So, two of them chose music as their ability, as their special thing and we valued it (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth added “It’s interesting [that] the class identify them as the `ones who do the music`... it’s interesting what they know about each other”. Conversely, Elizabeth had reflected on her observations of some of the children she had identified as musical who may also have had challenging needs. She commented:

I’m beginning to think ... it can be linked to children with their behaviour. The children I know who are disadvantaged, who I think have that extra music ability ... do have a couple of behaviour issues as well and perhaps if they had that music time, the behaviour issues would be improved (Elizabeth).

Just two of the eight interviewees referenced children's innate musicality. However, a link has been suggested between the power of music and its impact on children at both ends of the ability spectrum, as well as the potential therapeutic implications for children with behavioural needs.

### 10.2.2 Music as a vehicle for learning

Interviewees also commented on how music can be used a vehicle to support learning in diverse ways. Gillian remarked:

Music is just such a good vehicle for the children to learn. ... So, we are always singing. ... this week, we’ve got the chicks, so we’re singing songs related to chicks, we sing songs related to numbers to letters... it’s just made me consider how versatile music is and how it is a good tool to use with all children ... (Gillian).

Elizabeth concurred:

If you put the days of the week, for example, to a tune, they will learn it. If I try and teach days of the week or repetitive things, I could be doing it all year ... it won’t go in by the end of the year. But if I maybe just put a song on they’ll know it. So, it must aid learning in some way (Elizabeth).

These interview comments support the questionnaire findings on this subject.

### 10.2.3 Music incorporated into the daily routine

Three respondents noted the functional use of music as part of their daily routine, for a variety of purposes. Claire employed recorded music as a signal and an accompaniment for tidying up.

I always tend to use music as a method of tidying up often because I find it gets them to do it quicker. They like to do it to music. They will dance around and tidy up. It makes it less of a chore for them and they really enjoy it (Claire).

Elizabeth also sang tidy up songs:

We have a standard tidy up song, but I change it depending on the theme. We’re going to be going into sort of Spring and chickens, so there’ll be some kind of chicken march song where they cluck about to tidy up (Elizabeth).

The children in Elizabeth's class also enjoyed a daily wake-up song with actions first thing in the morning. Once the parents had left, the song served the dual purposes of bringing the children together to learn, as well as greet each other:

And then we'll have a wake-up song where we move as well and kind of focus on, sit down, now it's time to learn... (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth noted the social, greeting impact of the 'wake-up' song:

It is social because they almost say hello to each other in the mornings because they're all together... some of the songs have a bit of a hello, do a 'thumbs up' to your friend ... even if that isn't part of the song, I think, they look at each other to show a little action they're doing so it's almost a little welcome song for each other as well (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth also used recorded music to change routines:

We use it to sort of change routines in the classroom. When it's time to do something, I put a different sort of music on and then you don't have to explain, you don't have to use your voice anymore (Elizabeth).

The children in Frances' class ate their snack whilst listening to songs on CD as part of their daily routine. '*Dough gym*'<sup>31</sup> is another daily element which combines music with a fine motor skill activity. This is a commercial product developed by Alistair Bryce Clegg. Frances described '*Dough gym*':

Basically, it's developing fine motor skills using dough and it's all done to music ... and there's a soundtrack ... and it's all about sort of patting and moulding and pinching the dough, but they love it (Frances).

Thus, half of the participants have described the contribution music makes to their daily routine.

#### 10.2.4 Music as learning support

Beatrice described how music can be seen to support children with specific needs. She also added to the other interviewees' comments regarding the power of song over speech.

There's one little girl who finds it difficult ... to focus ... to concentrate and so her mum made up this little 'I've got to keep trying' song ... Often things that you sing, they listen to more than things that you say (Beatrice).

Elizabeth felt that music could be helpful for children with behavioural needs: "I think it could be used to improve behaviour for some children ... because they love it".

Elizabeth went on to explain her theory:

Because they've got an intelligence that they're not using and that ... will lead to difficulties in behaviour. I'm thinking of children who are, ... ADHD, it's probably ... just

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<sup>31</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.abcdoes.com/>

low-level behaviour. People sit and talk about them a bit. 'What are we going to do with them?' You know, parents struggle ... if I notice them musically in a positive way, then music is having a positive effect on them ... Often people talk about this child in a concerned way ... but look at the music, but when they're involved with music that's not the first thought that pops in your head ... You think 'Oh look at them and music. They've got a thing, they've got a flair' (Elizabeth).

In sum, in response to the first research question, it has been interesting to discover the ways in which music is integrated into the daily routine of children in the Reception class. The second point of note references the shared belief that music can make a positive difference to children with learning or behavioural needs. Of great import for the underpinning principle of this study is the claim, based on observation, that children are innately musical.

### 10.3 Musical biographies

During the course of the interviews the participants reflected on the place of music in their own lives. Listening to music assumed a significant role for at least half the participants. For Beatrice, listening to music was an important part of her daily routine and kept her on track:

... it usually involves the 'Today' programme to start with, ... but once I get in the car then that's Radio 2 ... and that keeps me on track ... quite often if I'm working in the evenings I'll put a Cd or something like that on ... and I usually listen to music on my headphones as I'm ... trying to fall asleep. ... Sometimes even when I'm walking the dogs I'll put something on my ... telephone and headphones and have a good sing along as we're tramping through the mud (Beatrice).

Elizabeth tended to listen to music mostly at weekends and during her free time:

But at weekends and relaxation time, then pretty much all the time. I tend to have my own music in the garden. I wouldn't go into the garden and do something if I didn't have music playing or clean the house without music playing (Elizabeth).

Three participants shared their enjoyment of live music: "I love listening to music and going to watch musicals" (Isabelle); "I think it's always very special to go and see music live" (Gillian); "We go to live gigs sometimes as a family" (Elizabeth). Conversely, Dawn mentioned that she doesn't choose to listen to a lot of music "Even in the car I don't have the radio on". Peace and quiet was a personal preference, yet it is interesting to note that Dawn was the only participant who sang to me during her interview ('Down in the Jungle'), as well as speaking rhythmically and drumming patterns on the table.

In terms of practical music making, participants were not keen to admit their involvement: "... it's not overly part of my life" (Isabelle); "A keen listener, ... not a very

able musician" (Beatrice); "I don't participate myself, the children do, but I don't participate myself" (Elizabeth). Yet, both Isabelle and Beatrice learned to play the flute, piano and recorder respectively when they were at school. Gillian played the piano when she was younger and explained her enjoyment of choral singing: "I used to be in the school choir which was lovely, because it is that sense of being as a group together". Hilary shared her love of singing:

I've always sung a lot I can't sing, but I sing a lot... I sang a lot with my own children at home... I ... belong to a very bad choir, church choir, um who don't meet regularly ... I retire at the end of the year and would love to join a choir and just keep singing (Hilary).

Three participants described how important music was to them: "I love music" (Gillian); "I'd lose a lot if I didn't have ... music" (Beatrice); "I have to say I love music" (Hilary).

Frances shared the influences that have shaped her love of music:

I think I learnt a lot of my singing and my love of music through church ... it's through that that I learned the traditional hymns and to me singing the traditional hymns I think helped me with my music ... and I remember my infant teacher ... and she had a love of music ... we used to do performances and plays ... I was quite a quiet child but I'd always get up and sing, because it's the one thing I felt confident doing, that I could do, so I think she inspired me from early (on) ... and then we used to sing in the choir at church. So, every Sunday we would sing and then when I went to my ... secondary school, I was part of the choir there ... I also did ballet as a young girl and obviously listening to that ... So, I was brought up in a real eclectic mix ... music was in our house all the time ... so there was Irish music, traditional hymn type music and then obviously ballet ... so I've had a real mix of music through my own life (Frances).

Half of the interviewees experienced practical music making in their formative years, giving them personal insight into the processes involved, as Beatrice summarises:

Though I learned to read music, it was very slow and it was a bit of a struggle, so ... I understand the theory. It's just that speeding up and I think that's practice isn't it? (Beatrice).

This comment is suggesting a view of the significance of reading traditional musical notation. This is noteworthy in the context of participant perceptions of musicality and musicianship, a theme for discussion in Chapter 11.

## 10.4 EYFS specialism

Each teacher's journey to teaching in the Early Years was traced, as well as the reasons for their preference for this age range. Notions of commitment, continuity and creativity form the focus for this section of the interview summary. Three interviewees, Hilary, Dawn and Beatrice, had been teaching for twenty years or more. A point of interest concerns the finding that their teaching experience had been confined to just

one or two schools. This longevity of teaching commitment to the Reception Year is perhaps suggesting a profile of potential low levels of mobility, resulting in less advertised teaching posts for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In contrast, Frances and Elizabeth have experienced teaching throughout the Primary school age range but are now firmly ensconced in the Reception Year of the EYFS. Elizabeth offered her reasons for her preference for working in the EYFS:

So, I have taught every Year group and now I am safely deposited in Reception...I probably like the way Reception is taught much more creatively, depending on what school you are in. Where I am now is a very creative curriculum in all the Year groups, but I like the `child-initiatedness` of Early Years compared to the sort of stricter KS2 curriculum (Elizabeth).

Frances described her enthusiasm for working with children in the Reception Year:

This is, I think, my fifth year as an Early Years Reception teacher. I have taught across all of KS1 and KS2. ... I prefer to be in foundation ... I think it's where the learning starts. I think it's where you can have the biggest impact on all areas of learning (Frances).

The journey to specialising as an EYFS teacher was explored further. Frances' case was interesting as she had travelled full circle, training as a Nursery Nurse prior to her degree and initial teacher training. She had experienced teaching children in Key Stages 1 and 2, in other words across the Primary phase of education, before returning to the Early Years. The English National Curriculum is organised into `key stages`. KS1 refers to children aged five to seven years and KS2, seven to eleven years of age.<sup>32</sup> Four participants had focused on the Early Years at the outset, either by the choice of their degree, Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course, or influenced by their first teaching placement experience: "So I ended up with a BEd., but it was specialist in Early Years" (Hilary) and "My degree was based on Primary education, focusing on Early Years" (Gillian). Claire completed a PGCE, specialising in Early Years. Isabelle explained that her path to the Early Years was influenced by her school placement experience:

Just because my first-year placement was in Reception ... I just loved this age group and I think you can be much more creative and, ... I just really enjoyed it (Isabelle).

To sum, it was clear that the interviewees demonstrated a distinct passion for the particular age group that they have chosen to teach. For most of these teachers, this was illustrated by both their motivation and enthusiasm, as well as their longstanding

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<sup>32</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>

commitment to teaching in the Early Years. Of note, both Hilary (an experienced teacher), as well as Isabelle (relatively new to the profession) had experienced difficulties changing age group (Hilary) or finding an initial post (Isabelle). These notions of longevity of service, as well as lack of mobility, may suggest possible implications for the availability of teaching opportunities in the Reception Year. For Hilary, the prospect of unemployment convinced her to continue studying: “the job situation was so bad ... that I opted to do an extra year” (Hilary). A scarcity of advertised teaching posts in the Reception Year resulted in Isabelle accepting a role in Year 2, before making the change to the Foundation Stage: “... initially, I tried to look for jobs in Reception, but there wasn’t really that much around” (Isabelle).

## 10.5 Initial teacher education

The interviewees reflected on the musical component of their initial training courses. They discussed positive school placement experiences and raised the notion of good role models or mentors. All the teachers had engaged in their initial teacher education, be it PGCE, BEd., or BA with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)<sup>33</sup>, within the time frame of the 1970s through to the 2010s. Only one interviewee unequivocally reported the music component of their initial training to be a positive, useful experience, Gillian stated:

We did cover a lot of music, so that gave me a good grounding. We had numerous sessions looking at the programme of study for music (Gillian).

Gillian explained that her musical confidence was in part due to the experience and enthusiasm of her primary education lecturer who, by chance, was a musician: “So I think because her passion was music, that’s why she felt it was really important”. Hilary also felt her course emphasised the value of music in the Early Years:

... we had quite regular inputs for very basic music. I mean it was sort of nursery rhymes and, nothing formal, but they emphasized the need to have a lot of singing and games ... so right from the beginning it was important (Hilary).

Half of the participants reflected an ambivalent representation of the music component of their initial teacher education (ITE). For example, Beatrice commented “There wasn’t

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<sup>33</sup> Qualified teacher status is required in order to teach in maintained primary schools. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts>

a vast amount of music involved". Claire, a recently qualified teacher, explained that in the course of her PGCE experience: "You didn't necessarily get what I'd call an equal balance of input" (Claire).

Isabelle, another recently qualified teacher, added a similar comment:

... we still got the odd input on music and how we could teach other things, cross curricularly though music as well ... what we got was good, but it wasn't kind of really, really thorough (Isabelle).

Dawn attributed the approach to being one of encouragement and enthusiasm, rather than instruction:

We didn't do a great amount of planning and learning how to teach music really ... I think what they were trying to get across more perhaps than skills ... was the enjoyment of it (Dawn).

Both Frances (trained in the 1990s) and Elizabeth (trained in the 2000s) presented a gloomier picture: "It was very, very limited ... I don't actually remember us having any actual training" (Frances); "I don't even remember one day. I believe we did, because I don't think there was anything we didn't do" (Elizabeth).

On a more positive note, it appeared that the school placement component of the ITE experience could have offered a more instructive, supportive influence, presenting exemplar of good music teaching practice. As Beatrice commented: "Probably most of the sort of use of music came during teaching practice ... observing teachers".

However, this does depend on the confidence, experience and musical expertise of the teacher mentor, not a guaranteed opportunity, likely to be arbitrary at best. Claire also pursued this line of thought:

And then if you then went to a school where ... perhaps you didn't get a lot of experience doing that in your placement either, you almost finish your PGCE year feeling a bit underprepared to teach certain things (Claire).

Further to the good musical grounding that Gillian received in her ITE, she was fortunate to have experienced a very positive musical input from her mentor in the course of her first school placement. This set her up to be musically confident and prepared to encourage children's musicality in her own setting:

... the class teacher ... did actually love music and I think because it's your first placement you are looking at that teacher as your role model to learn from ... she did lots of singing, lots of playing instruments with the children. I remember playing lots of games with the children, circle games, ... clapping games, singing games, listening to pitch ... (Gillian).



Half of the interviewees pointed to the positive influence of a musical mentor on their classroom practice. The mentors tended to be visiting music teachers (as mentioned by Gillian), in-house specialist music teachers (Hilary), or coordinators with a music specialism (as described by Claire):

I was really lucky, especially with Jayne ... with her being the music leader ... I've learnt a lot from her (Claire).

Elizabeth developed this theme of good fortune:

[I] was very lucky because she was a music person ... I saw some really good lessons that I could then learn from and probably still do. If I plan, if I plan lessons now, I will be basing it on things I've learnt from other colleagues more than anything else (Elizabeth).

Hilary also attributed her musical knowledge and confidence to an in-house music specialist:

Coming here and meeting [the Independent Music Education Consultant] ... inspired me ... she's the sort of person ... says 'Come on you can do it, try this. Come on you can do it, try that. We'll do this together'. And she got me doing quite a lot with her (Hilary).

This section has explored the participants' varied experiences of the music component of their initial teacher education. These experiences do not appear to be dependent on the era of their initial training. In other words, an improvement in the perceived quality of contribution has not been observed as time has passed. Similarly, the apparent inconsistencies in provision across courses raises a question of standardisation. It may be that Higher Education Institutions rely on the teacher placement experience to provide this element of the course. However, as noted above, this opportunity or benefit seems to be arbitrary, rather than guaranteed. Indeed, it cannot be assumed that good musical practice can be evidenced in every Reception classroom. Of concern is the element of chance, first, in the quality and quantity of the Higher Education Institution contribution - where there is one, in the current wide range of pre-service teacher provision. The second concern references the school placement experience and whether school mentors are able to offer the musical input required to enable young teachers to feel confident about incorporating musical opportunities and experiences into their classroom practice. On a more upbeat note, the participants have shared very positive reflections of the influence of mentors that they have encountered, as well as the considerable impact on their practice of teaching music.

## 10.6 Constraints and value

A recurring theme arising during the interviews was one of perceived constraints. Half of the participants reflected on the external pressures created by school performance tables,<sup>34</sup> as well as the school inspection process (Office for Standards in Education).<sup>35</sup> Some Reception teachers also commented on internal pressures which constrain musical opportunities within the Reception classroom.

Interestingly, it was the two recently qualified teachers who specifically reported on the pressures within the curriculum. Although, it was clearly a subtext in other conversations. Isabelle described “the practicalities of being able to fit [music] in”:

... with the pressures of having to teach so much maths and English all the time ... we're having to do ... an extra maths session which is called 'maths meetings'; we do them every day ... so that's kind of replaced music a little bit at the minute (Isabelle).

In contrast, positive value was given to music as a subject by this school, as the whole school staff had experienced musical CPD opportunities. In addition, an annual feature of the school diary was music week, as Isabelle explained:

[An Independent Music Education Consultant] ... came in and did it [CPD] on cross curricular music for all the year groups as well and gave us a few ideas... lots of people took those ideas and put them ... those into place within the music week which is really good (Isabelle).

Claire also commented on the pressure within the Early Years curriculum:

With seven areas of learning, I think we always find... (it) quite a challenge to cover everything and to try and make sure that you cover everything in equal measure... There is a danger, I think, of putting more emphasis on writing and maths and they are often the goals the children find harder to achieve than perhaps some of the others. I think sometimes there's a danger that we put too much pressure on those things and don't actually allow enough time and enough experiences for more creative things (Claire).

Dawn, a more experienced teacher, also reflected on the curriculum pressures, suggesting that music was not valued as it might be:

I think it's like the pressure ... to get the writing, the reading the maths ... the expectation is by the end of Reception class... It's huge ... I don't think it [music] gets the value it should perhaps get ... it's not given high enough preference, ... importance really. ... I think it would be lovely to give it more, but I don't quite know how ... you can only fit so much in (Dawn).

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Elizabeth described the level of intervention children in her Reception class received to reinforce their core subject learning:

There`s a lot of intervention happens, and so maths and literacy carry on pretty much all day in different groups. So, children might get it two or even three times a day (Elizabeth).

On the subject of `fitting it all in` Elizabeth added:

So, if ... we haven`t got quite as much of the core subjects done ... That little bit of maths or literacy or reading will be done in the afternoon ... which takes a little bit of... music, ... P.E. and ... something creative.... I have to drag it from somewhere ... that little bit of time (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth also described the internal constraints in being able to incorporate as much music in the Reception curriculum as she might wish or had managed in previous posts. The first referred to the deployment of teaching assistants when managing “a high proportion of children with challenging behaviour”. There are occasions when Elizabeth thought “Today I haven`t got that support. I might not put that activity out”. Elizabeth would prefer to offer an outside musical activity, but, as there are “five or six children who would need an eye kept on them with those resources”, she felt a reluctance to do so. Elizabeth surmised:

I think to myself `Why is isn`t it out as often?` `Why is it on a Thursday evening I might look at the box of resources and think `Ooh I`ll do it next week Just because I`m not sure it can be managed today` (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth commented on a second constraint, explaining why musical activities were not provided indoors all the time. That was “because it can get noisy” and music played at high volume became a sensory issue for the autistic children in the class: “We`ve probably got quite a few autistic children and that`s a sensory ... issue for everyone” (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth contrasted her current obstacles with her experience at a previous school:

I think I would have had ... free access to the musical instruments more at Grantsire [county pseudonym] because possibly only two children would break them, walk on them, you know, or require support. Whereas here, it`s a bigger proportion of children who I think would struggle to use and then it always spoils it for the other children (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth also described her experiences of her first teaching school, where she considered music to have been valued. In her opinion, this was due to the “strong music foundation and probably two or three confident music teachers ... so it had value in the curriculum”. Her comments echoed those of Isabelle:

I once had music training at Thomas School [school pseudonym] paid for by the school, the whole school had it, which again shows that they had a commitment to it and it was very good training (Elizabeth).

The interviewees highlighted some of the constraints, both external and internal, that impact on their perceived ability to provide sufficient musical opportunities for the children. Yet, in contrast, the participants had also begun to identify factors which promote the value of music in primary school settings.

## 10.7 Music input

A variety of music practice was evidenced in the course of the eight interviews. This mostly consisted of opportunities for child-initiated learning designed by the class teacher, with some formal adult input in some cases. In the independent school, an in-house music specialist taught the Reception class. At the same time, music was incorporated into the daily life by the class teacher. Beatrice commented:

She (the music specialist) has a certain curriculum that she works through that we're aware of, she's doing fast and slow ... and we talk to her about our topics ... so she ties it in with the topics that we're doing (Beatrice).

In this school, the music and class teachers talked regularly, discussing the class topic and individual children's musical learning, and popular activities were reinforced back in the classroom by the Reception teacher.

A recent development for another Primary school included employing two, part-time specialists to teach music during PPA time to the combined Reception/Year One class once a fortnight. PPA refers to the time given to classroom teachers to facilitate 'Planning, Preparation and Assessment' (DfES, 2004; NUT, 2005). Often independent Physical Education coaches and music teachers are brought into to offer the children specialist teaching in these or other subjects during the class teacher's PPA time (DfES, 2004). Hilary reported that the children enjoyed the singing during PPA time. However, it was not clear if they were following a curriculum:

... the children are enthusiastic about it ... They may be focusing on different dynamics, pitch or whatever it is, but it's not as obvious... So, it may just be the way they're doing it, but I have the feeling it's not so structured (Hilary).

In a third school, a musically confident HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) had been teaching music to the Reception children "...probably once every three weeks"

(Isabelle). Subsequently, however, music was taught by two members of staff, as Isabelle explained:

... but now because another lady's came back into Reception, they kind of share it ... every other week ... the PPA cover, they take it in turns, so one of the ladies will do it every once, every, one in three weeks (Isabelle).

In this instance, planning as well as assessment and recording of the children's musical learning was earmarked for future development. Elizabeth remarked that music provision for her Reception class was "more likely to be child-initiated ... I notice it happening and go and support". Elizabeth also reflected on what her ideal would be "But in, In the past I think I would have aimed for an adult-led, my aim I think, I would be happy with fortnightly..." (Elizabeth).

In sum, a variety of practice was evidenced in these individual comments concerning music in school Reception classes. Some schools had a music teacher on the staff, but this was rare. Some schools employed a visiting music teacher or musician to teach music during PPA time throughout the school. This did not necessarily extend to the Reception class for a number of reasons, including financial or timetabling constraints, and/or the view that particular pedagogical expertise was required for the Early Years. These visiting music specialists could be sourced through the county music service or local Music Education Hub.<sup>36</sup> Established in 2012, in response to the Government's National Plan for Music Education (DfE/DCMS, 2011) these organisations were formed:

"... to create joined-up music education provision, respond to local need and fulfil the objectives of the Hub as set out in the National Plan for Music Education" (ACE, n.d. <sup>37</sup>)

Alternatively, schools could contract music specialists by private arrangement. Questions may be raised with regard to the quality of provision, such as the teaching experience, qualifications and expertise of the facilitator. In addition, issues concerning good practice, curriculum planning, as well as the recording of children's musical achievements might be considered. It is interesting to note that, in general, the responses were more focused on adult-led music provision, rather than child-initiated musical play, advocated as best practice by the early childhood music community

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-1>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-1>

Young (2018). Similarly, there did not appear to be a strong emphasis on the 'In the moment planning' (ITMP) approach to early years pedagogy. Namely, planning in the moment experiences to respond to and/or extend a child's learning interests (Ephgrave, 2018).

## 10.8 Planning, differentiation and 'next steps'

A mixed set of interview responses was presented from the Reception teachers with regard to questions on the subject of planning for musical learning. These ranged from 'none' (Isabelle), through 'it's more ad hoc' (Frances), to a detailed comment on the creative curriculum. Gillian describes her approach to planning: "Our music is incorporated, we don't tend to plan ... subjects in isolation because each area of learning...(is) always integrated" (Gillian).

Gillian offered an illustrative example of the creative, cross-curricular approach:

Our book this week is Julia Donaldson's 'The Scarecrow's Wedding' ... So, the children have made a ... life size scarecrow, and we're going to re-enact a wedding ceremony. ...Our music is incorporated ... so for music we have got songs incorporated within our maths planning, so counting, warm up songs ... and then for the scarecrows wedding part, for the actual ceremony the children are going to be playing instruments. We're going to be listening to music, we're going to be singing songs (Gillian).

A similar approach was described by Dawn. 'Africa' was their class topic and included a class performance for parents:

This week it's all about Africa and we've included ... the rhythm of the words [tapped table] ... and we sang a song ... [Sang: 'Down in the jungle'] ... I was trying to get them to listen to the [tapped beat] (Dawn).

The teaching environment for Isabelle and her colleagues comprised two classrooms, a large conservatory and an outdoor area. In order to avoid overwhelming the children and with a view to encouraging more focused play, it had been recommended that the staff did not offer the children the full range of continuous provision (O'Connor, 2008; Bryce-Clegg, 2015). As Isabelle explained:

So we haven't done any music this week ... actually the music area is closed this week...it's quite a big area, so we've been advised to offer less ... so that the children aren't overwhelmed by everything ... so if we think it (the topic) lends itself ... if it lends itself naturally then we'll open those areas ...That's what we're trying to work on, rather than opening them just for the sake of it, because it's all about ... children playing purposefully (Isabelle).

Claire also described team planning for half-termly projects based on a theme or book, with an emphasis on providing focused learning opportunities which could be included into the child-initiated continuous provision:

We are doing currently a topic `Let`s Explore` ... (which) allows us a way of enhancing the provision with a purpose ... for the different areas like music, like art we ... include ... that onto a continuous provision plan and that`s what we`re going to offer in terms of extras ... during busy learning time, what we would like their focus to be, and ... in what direction we`d like them to try and move the learning (Claire).

In practice, published music schemes did not seem prevalent as a resource for curriculum organisation, planning and preparation for this group of interviewees. Both Dawn and Elizabeth illustrated this: “We have used Musical Express before ... and I did like that, but we haven`t used it so much this year” (Dawn). Elizabeth commented:

I don`t follow ... any schemes. I try and make it what (interests) the children ... They`re into sheep. They`ve asked me lots of questions about sheep, so for next week I will come up with something `sheepy` (Elizabeth).

It is interesting to compare and contrast the participants` responses on the subject of planning with those of Annabel, a music specialist (and School Leader in Education for music). Annabel, employed as a full-time music teacher, worked in a large three-form entry school and her timetable included teaching the three Reception classes. Annabel discussed her long term (a three-topic year); medium term (smaller focus areas) and short-term planning: “that`s broken down into the objectives that the Reception teachers needed to teach”. Annabel went on to describe how she planned the musical component of the Reception curriculum:

Musically, I try and link in as much as I can ... I`m changing how I plan... thinking musically about what they need to do, but also thinking about how it ties in with what they are doing. So, they had animals at one point, so we did a lot of animal music, animal pictures trying to make sounds to represent different animals, making a composition around the safari park, thinking of compositions and writing it down, exploring sounds, singing songs from Africa – things like that (Annabel).

Annabel was developing her practice to relate her teaching to the context in which the children were working within the Reception class. At the same time, she gave due consideration to the music skills and elements the children should experience within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Annabel acknowledged that she refers to the new `*Music Express*` scheme (Collins, 2018): “because I want to have that security of the progression of skills”. However, she also recognised another change in her practice:

I used to use Music Express for Reception all the time, as a kind of ... bible that we use ... but all the work we have done this term has been totally what I`ve thought of ... and really approaching it from what the children have come to school with, rather than saying this is what we`re going to do (Annabel).

In addition to indoor planning of adult-led musical activities, Annabel planned activities for outdoor learning in a “kind of bandstand”:

Then I would ...have a group make a maraca out of an envelope and then, in the bandstand, when they're exploring learning, in that box would be different sorts of maracas, things from around Africa ... and the task and pictures related to that (Annabel).

To sum, it seems that this is one such example of purposeful musical activities being incorporated into the children's learning, often with songs and tasks related to the planned theme, book or context currently being explored by the Reception class. Noteworthy was Elizabeth's mention of responding to the children's current interests, e.g., sheep, as well as Annabel's comment with regard to starting from where the children are at. These musical activities could include songs related to the topic, or songs to support other areas of learning such as number. Listening activities took place in some classes and children explored and played soundmakers, perhaps more regularly as part of the continuous, child-initiated provision. Compositional tasks appeared less common, although reference to the questionnaire responses on this matter would provide further insight. The music specialist, alone, mentioned progression of music skills. This theme was developed further in the discussion of differentiation and 'next steps' described below and will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 11.

### 10.8.1 Differentiation

The Reception teachers provided an interesting array of responses on the subject of differentiation in music. These comprised the following observations from five of the participants: “If I'm honest, I don't think that we do a lot of differentiation” (Dawn); “To be honest, I wouldn't say we necessarily differentiate for music” (Claire); “I don't think I differentiate my group for going to music” (Elizabeth); “I think really at the moment, to be honest, it's through outcome” (Frances) and “No... I think it's by outcome really. They can all access everything and it is by observing those children ... to see what they can do” (Hilary). A lack of knowledge and confidence to differentiate for varying musical abilities prevailed, too. As Elizabeth explained: “I haven't ever differentiated by musical ability ... I don't think I know enough about that”. Claire and Isabelle's comments also concurred with this thread, as outlined below.

Claire, a recently qualified teacher expanded on her comment above, offering two explanations:



...if we were to differentiate, I don't know where I would begin to do that because ... I wouldn't know which children are more interested in it, which children are more able when it comes to you know playing music, engaging with music and which ones aren't. So, I don't think I'd know where to start with differentiation. With things like writing, I feel like I've got a real grasp (Claire).

Claire's second explanation referenced the Early Learning Goals and Development Matters (Early Education, 2012) document as sources of guidance:

... especially again because we don't have a lot to go off from the curriculum that we work from. We don't really get any guidance to say, well a child that can do this, is an 'emerging' child, but a child that can do this, is an 'expected' child ... because there aren't many objectives linked specifically to music, I think it makes differentiation really difficult (Claire).

In contrast, Gillian referred to the 'ages and stages' of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework as the basis for planning for differentiation in music. She stated:

In Reception, we work ... to the ages and stages, so each class teacher and TA [Teaching Assistant] is aware of where the individual child is and then we modify the planning from there. So, we extend the children who have hit the 40-60 mark [this refers to the 40-60 months 'age and stage' of learning and development outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework] ... we move them to the Early Learning Goals. Children who have achieved the early goals secure, work to exceeding and then once they're very confident at that we then move them to the Year one ages and stages (Gillian).

Isabelle provided further insight on the subject of her lack of confidence in differentiation in music:

That's another thing ... that I've said that I'd like to know how to do a bit more. ... especially at uni ... we didn't get taught anything to do with differentiating the music (Isabelle).

Isabelle went on to distinguish between adult-led teaching and child-initiated play, describing the music challenge cards that are employed for the latter:

It is differentiated, so the green challenge is the easiest challenge and the yellow challenge is in the middle and the red challenge is the most difficult one. So ... we kind of tell them what the challenges are, then they access it at the level that's appropriate to them. So, we do differentiate in the continuous provision but when it comes to adult-led teaching, not so much (Isabelle).

Beatrice described the supportive role offered to children during their continuous provision:

A lot of it is child-initiated anyway, so that will be at their level...I will give more support to the ones that a) find concentration difficult, or b) don't understand, you know, find it harder to [follow] instructions, and that type of thing, so I would then support them, or my TA would work with them and support them (Beatrice).

It can be surmised from these comments that the topic of differentiation in music in the Reception Year was one that lacked clarity. This appeared to be compounded by the

breadth of understanding of the notion of differentiation. Second, conflicting issues arose on the subject of whether it was appropriate to differentiate adult-led and/or child-initiated musical learning in the Reception Year. Finally, a gap in understanding and knowledge with regard to how to differentiate musical learning was identified by some participating Reception teachers.

### 10.8.2 Musical progression (‘next steps’)

Some of the concerns raised under the subject of differentiation were also relevant for the topic of musical progression, or ‘next steps’ (DCSF, 2008). Typically, the interviewees considered that ‘next steps’ in music were not actively or overtly pursued. This could be due to curriculum overload as described elsewhere, for example, ‘it’s just another thing to think about’. Similarly, the ‘next steps’ in reading, writing and maths were considered to be more essential and urgent at this stage. Alternatively, due consideration and understanding of how Reception children might be able to progress the different strands of their musical learning were not always fully realised. Four participants commented on the concept of musical progression in their Reception classes: “It’s very lacking” (Isabelle); “I know I don’t do enough of it at all” (Frances); “I don’t think we’re ever so strong on that” (Dawn); and “No, you see, not really now” (Hilary).

Gillian and Claire offered contrasting perspectives with respect to the guidance on the ‘ages and stages’ of musical learning and development, as well as the Early Learning Goals, outlined in the ‘Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage’ document (Early Education, 2012):

We look at the EYFS curriculum, the ages and stages of the children and that’s how we plan our musical progression, because it has got what steps the children should be doing, and once they achieve that, we move on (Gillian).

I think ‘Development Matters’ doesn’t always support with that ... to say the least. ...if you look at the statements as they move from 30 to 50, 40 to 60 and then obviously the goal, even within ‘Being Imaginative’, I think they get sort of like a token mention in it and so for us to know what they should be doing in order to be making progress in music is very difficult, because it doesn’t really lay it out for you, in the way if you look at writing you can see very clearly they need to be doing this and then they need to move on to do this and then to progress to the goal they need to be able to do this (Claire).

Elizabeth described her practice of ‘layering’ with regard to moving children to the next step in their musical learning:

I think what I meant by layering was that, within that group, I would think of children I could progress more than the others. I might be able to ask deeper questions and I

would maybe expect that some, for them to be able to explain to me their link, why did you choose that instrument? ... and maybe expect them to give me some language ... (or) maybe I could then get them to (create an) order, so then we're making more adaptations ... And then ... I might think 'Okay you've chosen your instruments, play it, now how would we change it?' (Elizabeth).

Annabel put forward her musical perspective on the issue of 'next steps':

Increasingly the ... emphasis on all musical tasks is a case of here are the things that we're doing and you need to go and explore that yourself ... The idea is that you give them the skills, you show them what is a model or an idea to start with and then they go off and they compose, or they explore themselves (Annabel).

The interviewees presented contrary perspectives on the subject of whether the 'ages and stages' of the EYFS framework provided sufficient guidance to support the next steps in musical learning. There appears to be a disconnect, as Claire illustrated with her 'writing' example. Claire clearly felt confident with the support offered in writing, to enable her to progress children's learning in that area. However, Claire also identified that this was not the case for music. Some participants had commented that the 'ages and stages' descriptors, as well as the early learning goal for music outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework were vague and limited. These views suggested that little guidance and support was provided for classroom teachers in the Reception Year to aid pedagogical concerns such as planning, differentiation, progression and assessment in music. In addition, the statements do not appear to offer a fair and accurate representation of the potential musical accomplishments of the children at this age, as identified in the research literature (see Chapters 2, 3 and 4). On the other hand, this could be a tacit acknowledgement that this is an area of learning with diverse opportunities, experiences and expectations, to which children of the Reception age may not have equal access (Young, 2018).

Music input within initial teacher education for preparing Reception teachers also presents a mixed picture. The constraint of teaching time allocated to music within Higher Education institutions restricts the breadth and depth of music pedagogical practices that can be offered to students (Gifford, 1993; Beauchamp, 1997; Hennessy, 2006; Hallam et al., 2009; Stunell, 2010). In turn, this impacts on the range of knowledge and skills newly qualifying teachers have at their disposal in order to facilitate the children's musical learning and development in the Reception class with confidence.

## 10.9 Recordkeeping and assessment

All eight interviewees used 'Tapestry',<sup>38</sup> an online learning journal for logging children's experience and learning, as their means of recording evidence gleaned through teacher observations and parent commentary of the children's engagement and progress. The online system, originally specific to the Early Years, offers three particular features. These comprise the capacity to upload photographs and videos (beneficial to capture those ephemeral musical moments); a quick and easy reference guide to the ages and stages recorded in 'Development Matters'; as well as direct reporting via email to parents. Teachers upload both short and long, detailed observations onto 'Tapestry'. Beatrice described the three refinement stages of recording outlined in 'Development Matters' and on 'Tapestry', beginning with the seven areas of learning, the age boundaries and finally the level the child is working at:

I use the EYFS assessment across the seven areas. So, under the seven areas of learning music will come under EAD... So 40-60+. So, it just uses statements... And then three refinements: emerging, developing and secure (Beatrice).

Elizabeth commented on the ephemeral nature of the Expressive Arts and Design (EAD) learning goal (STA 2018) with respect to selecting the appropriate level of working or refinement, as described above:

The Early Learning Goal is as woolly as anything, so ..., you make your own judgement whether it's emerging, developing or secure (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth went on to explain how her team arrived at these judgements:

I think that's where our strength ... is that as a team we have ... an understanding, I don't know where we get the understanding from, by talking to each other a lot ... we have an understanding of whether a child is secure in that, or whether they're still emerging, or whether they are, you know have got more than that (Elizabeth).

Annabelle offered her view of the EAD learning goal from her stance as a specialist music teacher:

The statements are so vague ... I've pulled out the ones that are anything to do with music, but to me they're just too, they're not specific musically, ... they're not tangible enough (Annabel).

An innovative feature of 'Tapestry' is the immediate and communicative nature of the online dialogue with parents. Dawn explained the advantages of this form of reporting:

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<sup>38</sup> Foundation Stage Forum Ltd, 2012

It's published straight away and we'll often get a little comment back from parents and then sometimes we'll make a comment back ... it's a two-way conversation (Dawn).

Both Dawn and Frances referred to the reciprocal nature of the communications with parents by email, working towards a holistic, partnership approach to sharing the children's achievements:

Also, the parents, if their children are doing anything at home, they can send it in as well ... So, it's a very much a two-way thing (Frances).

[the parents say] 'They've done this this and this', or 'so and so wanted to show you' (Dawn).

Claire described the benefits of parents being able to access and watch the videos of their child's musical achievements. She recalled a recent example of a girl following coloured notation to play a handbell tune prepared by her colleague:

She (the class teacher) was able to take a video recording of that and put it on 'Tapestry' not only as evidence then for her ability of music, but then also her parents were able to watch it. I think her Mum actually came in and said to Mrs Whyte how nice it was to be able to see that she'd achieved that (Claire).

Some Reception teachers also recorded assessment data onto I.T. systems in line with whole school policy (see Chapter 5.6). These included 'Target tracker' (Dawn and Claire) and 'Classroom Monitor' (Hilary). Dawn explained:

'Tapestry' ... is the means to collect the evidence ... we grade it, you know as to their age band and then that feeds into their assessment and then that goes onto 'Target tracker' and that's all analysed ... by (the) team managers (Dawn).

In addition to the use of 'Tapestry' and other whole school assessment systems, some Reception teachers employed a third level of record keeping for their own purposes. Gillian explained her weekly tick list system which enabled her to track the children's learning:

So, if I'm focusing on whatever element, I do the 'tick' if they've understood, 'star' if they were like exceptional and ready to move on, a 'line' if it was a combination of adult support and child-led, and then if the child needed complete adult support from me or one of the T.A.'s, just a 'dot' (Gillian).

In a similar vein, Hilary used tick charts, also completed by the Teaching Assistant "just to make sure we've got the coverage". Hilary employed 'ticks' and 'crosses' to represent the emerging and secure levels of engagement.

Dawn offered a reflection on this evidence gathering process:

The thing is, ... for your evidence, you've got to capture those moments when they're doing their child initiated ... So, it's just capturing that moment, really, with those children, but you don't get it for all of them, by a long chalk ... and that's the tricky bit (Dawn).

To sum, the perception was that the Early Learning Goals and associated music statements for Expressive Arts and Design appear to lack sufficient precision to enable some teachers to make confident judgements with regard to the musical achievements of Reception children. The almost intuitive approach to selecting the appropriate level of refinement was a case in point. Whilst the online learning platform offered an instant record keeping system, with the advantages of a multi modal means of presenting evidence, one cannot but wonder about the time consuming and perhaps intrusive expectation that Reception teachers might communicate regularly with parents in their own personal, out-of-hours, time. It was notable that the conversations regarding the assessment and recordkeeping of children's musical achievements mostly centred on systems rather than music (Ofsted, 2012).

## 10.10 Continuing professional development

A range of themes emerged whilst discussing opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD). These comprised: (1) a complete absence of music CPD further to ITE; (2) whole school music training, with associated opportunities and constraints; (3) identifying who the training providers might be; and (4) a perceived need for musical input and the forms that that might take.

A varied picture of training opportunities was painted in the interviews. Frances noted that she had not participated in any musical CPD since her initial teacher training in the (early) 1990s. Hilary commented "Nothing recently ... the last time I did anything (was) ... ten years ago" and that was with an in-house, expert, CPD provider "with [the Independent Music Education Consultant] just before she left". Elizabeth described the positive impact of one whole school music CPD session she experienced in her first post, many years ago:

I've had loads of training on maths and English, I don't remember them specifically ... I've had one bit of training on music ... and I can visualise her ... and I'm aware that I use that... because I haven't got much else to draw on, whereas maths I've had loads of input for years, so it must all be merging into one (Elizabeth).

Isabelle also talked about the benefits of more recent whole school CPD:

I think that's definitely helped ... teachers' attitudes towards being a bit more confident teaching it. (It) was probably a big barrier before (Isabelle).

Then Isabelle went onto to identify and relate a previously mentioned constraint, that music CPD may have encouraged staff, developing their confidence to engage more in musical activities with the children. However, if there were no opportunities within the curriculum to apply these new practices, any CPD input may be deemed superfluous:

... but the sad thing is, ... in a way it doesn't matter how much training you have, ... it is the practicalities of being able to fit it in. I think that's what has been the frustrating thing ... because people do get really inspired from the training that they get, and they really enjoy it and always come away saying how good it is, and then it's just the reality of not being able to fit it in (Isabelle).

Two further constraints were identified as possible explanations for the lack of musical CPD opportunities for Reception teachers. Limited funding being the first and the second references and the low priority the subject area is given in school development plans.

It has never ever been I would say a priority, it's always been your literacy, your numeracy, your science (Frances).

It's just not one of our priorities, so we've not been offered it... Yes, ...because finances limit us ... priorities have to be chosen from...[the] school development plan (Hilary).

Elizabeth described a further challenge in relation to whole school CPD which, by default, impacts on the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching staff:

[In my] current school, a lot of music is provided by outside agencies and so maybe they wouldn't see a need for the teachers to be trained (Elizabeth).

On the subject of training providers, the interviewees described some recent service changes. As Beatrice noted:

(It) used to be that the 'Birth to Five' service ... (they) used to run lots of training courses. That's tailed off a little bit more now because of cost and things like that I think (Beatrice).

Three of the participants (Hilary, Gillian, Isabelle) referenced a local, nationally recognised, Independent Music Education Consultant (IMEC), with whom private arrangements had been made to access music. Annabel, the specialist music teacher, also praised the Independent Music Education Consultant's work with the local music hub, although it was not clear that Reception teachers were the target audience for these opportunities: "She's done a fantastic job with what she's done with the Hub as well" (Annabel). Annabel offered further comment on music CPD from her music specialist perspective, observing that:

I know that in the general school life ... music is not seen as one of the important subjects, so actually quality CPD is not always out there (Annabel).

Ofsted (2013) notes that Music Education Hubs (MEHs) evolved from traditional local authority services may have more experience in providing instrumental tuition, than providing classroom CPD. In this context, Annabel acknowledged the contribution her local MEH has made for the generalist class teacher, yet recognised there was still a gap in provision for music specialists, or musically confident Reception class teachers:

I think the Johnstown Music Hub has made amazing changes to how they`re providing CPD ... the teachers, the class teachers that are generalists can get an awful lot from those courses, I`m not talking about them, I`m talking about me as a musician, as someone who is doing music all the time, where would you go to get your ideas? (Annabel).

Annabel explained that the local MEH funded local, city-wide music in-service training as part of her School Leader in Education role. Annabel described her innovative approach to CPD, which emphasises 'on site' support:

I think that`s why when the Hub seconds me and I go out, I have these Wednesdays, I always go to the school. ... I do offer for people to come and watch me, but I know full well if they come and watch me, that`s limited what you`re going to get from that ... Watching someone teach is one thing, but actually going into their environment and seeing what their situation is so much more important (Annabel).

Conversely, Annabelle added to the reasons, above, as to why the music courses provided by the local music hub are often poorly attended:

I know for a fact that the CPD that they have provided this year has been very poorly attended... I just don`t think that music is ... high level of importance in schools... But I know that in Johnstown we`ve got a problem with ... results and they`re trying to put as much effort in as they can to getting the results up. I think maybe the arts are getting the brunt of that (Annabel).

A very mixed picture of CPD opportunities and provision, as well as benefits and constraints has been presented by the interviewees. Within this context, the Reception teachers considered the way forward. Frances shared her preliminary plans, further to a recent CPD opportunity, which had got her thinking about focusing on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) for her new cohort of children in the Autumn term:

We want to do music and art, because they are the areas that are always pushed to the side and actually if you can get those two first, you`ll have your handwriting, you`ll have your speaking, your listening, you`ll have your imagination ... so they`re our focus areas (Frances).

Claire suggested that she would find it beneficial to learn more about progression in music learning, developing her observation above that this was an area outside her knowledge and experience:



...if the child is showing you they can do this, how do you then support them in getting them to do what we would call the next step ... actually allow them to progress and help them to move their learning forward in terms of music (Claire).

Elizabeth and Hilary offered contrasting and alternative perspectives on the subject of continuing professional development (CPD). Elizabeth suggested an Early Years expert and at the same time considered two of the constraints to teaching music in the Reception Year, mentioned above:

... someone ... specific to Early Years... Someone who gets Early Years and can show me how to do it with a little bit of time and a little bit of resources would be the most useful I think (Elizabeth).

Further to reflecting on her previous INSET experiences with the Independent Music Education Consultant, Hilary pursued the theme of `on-site` CPD described earlier by Annabel:

Rather than training, just seeing somebody, I was going to say performing, it's a bit of a performance ... somebody that was recognised as a good music teacher ...In class ... with the children (Hilary).

In addition, Hilary surmised that teacher confidence was a decisive factor in this thread. Hilary offered her view on how best to support and develop Reception teachers with respect to improving musical learning and development within the classroom:

I think it is confidence because I am not a music specialist. I do love music as I've said and I need support, but it's not going off and doing a course or anything ... It is, it's seeing somebody do it, simple things that you think `Oh yeah, I can do that` (Hilary).

This section of the chapter sought to reflect on the issues and concerns raised by the participants on the theme of continuing professional development. It has reviewed the many factors put forward by the interview participants, suggesting that this is a complex topic of discussion with a variety of stakeholders with differing needs, perspectives and motivations, who are encountering a range of constraints.

## 10.11 Summary

The open, exploratory and reflective nature of the semi-structured interviews afforded greater insights into the complexities of the research phenomenon. Further to the broad contextual frame set by the questionnaire data, the in-depth and rich detail proffered by the interview responses contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges encountered by teachers, on the subject of facilitating musical learning in the Reception Year.

In response to the first of the three open-ended main themes of the semi-structured interviews (Appendix 8), just two of the eight Reception teachers referenced children's innate musicality. Second, confirming the findings from the questionnaire data, the functional uses of music were shared. Namely, incorporating music into the daily routine; and second, that music was employed as a vehicle to scaffold learning in other curricular areas. A third area of interest was introduced, namely the motivational and/or therapeutic value of music, particularly for those children with special and/or behavioural needs.

At the same time, the Reception teachers shared their concerns with regard to their experiences of the constraints and value given to music in the current educational climate. Half of the interview participants commented on the marginalisation of music within the Reception Year curriculum, due to the perception of external pressures created by league tables and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which impact on Primary schools. Some Reception teachers also shared their reflections of internal pressures which constrained the provision of musical opportunities within the Reception classroom.

The eight Reception teachers shared personal biographical detail of the role of music in their lives, described as `important` in three cases. Listening to music, in particular, played a significant part for most of the participants. Half of the interviewees had experienced practical music making in their formative years, although in general, they were reluctant to admit their involvement.

The third theme focused on each participant's journey to teaching in the EYFS phase of education. Preferences for this stage of learning raised notions of commitment, continuity and creativity. A distinct passion for this particular age group was clearly articulated by the interviewees, illustrated by both their motivation and enthusiasm, as well as their longstanding commitment, in some cases, to teaching in the Early Years.

During the course of the interviews, the participants reflected on the musical component of their initial training courses, discussed school placement experiences and raised the subject of positive music role models or mentors. Only one (from eight) interviewees unequivocally reported the music component of their initial training to be positive and useful. Of note is the finding that the ITE music experience was consistently variable across the decades. Similarly, the quality of the musical input from the school placement experience was also arbitrary. In contrast, some participants

shared very positive reflections on the impact of the contribution made by mentors that they have encountered, which have exerted considerable influence on their teaching practice of music.

A variety of practice was described in the course of the eight interviews with regard to music provision for children in the Reception class. It mostly consisted of opportunities for child-initiated learning designed by the class teacher with some formal adult input in some cases. Some schools had a music teacher on the staff, but this was rare. Others employed a visiting music teacher, or musician, to teach music during PPA time. In one case musical teaching assistants were responsible for coordinating the music provision in the Reception class.

Responses to the focus of the second research question on the subject of confidence to plan and facilitate musical learning raised a mixed set of responses ranging from 'none', to 'ad hoc', to 'integrated within the creative curriculum provision'. The participants' descriptions of musical activities included songs related to the topic or songs to support other areas of learning such as number. Listening activities took place in some classes and children explored and played soundmakers, perhaps more regularly as part of the continuous, child-initiated provision. Compositional activities appeared less common.

The Reception teachers provided an interesting array of responses on the subjects of differentiation and progression, or 'next steps', in music. Typically, the participants considered that 'next steps' in music were not actively or overtly pursued. Gaps in understanding and knowledge with regard to how to differentiate musical learning were identified by some teachers. One participant made the comparison and reported greater confidence for differentiating children's learning in literacy. Most participants opined that in the respect of music pedagogical concerns, the Early Years Foundation Stage framework provided little guidance and support for Reception teachers.

All eight Reception teachers interviewed in the course of this study used '*Tapestry*', an online learning journal for logging children's experience and learning, as their means of recording evidence gleaned through teacher observations and parent commentary of the children's engagement and progress. A point of interest concerns the observation that conversations regarding the assessment and documentation of children's musical achievements mostly centred on systems, rather than music.

The final research question centred on the topic of continuing professional development (CPD). Discussion ranged from the complete absence of opportunities to engage in music CPD, since initial teacher education (ITE), for two participants (in ten or twenty years of teaching), to whole school music training with associated opportunities and constraints. Perceived benefits comprised increased staff confidence, motivation and enthusiasm. These benefits were contrasted with the time constraints to implement new ideas and learning, within a curriculum already perceived as overcrowded. Additional reported constraints included limited funding and the low priority the subject area was given in school development plans, as well the lack of perceived need for music CPD. An interesting dilemma was raised by the perception that CPD might be viewed by schools as unnecessary since music was being delivered by outside providers or agencies. A further consequence of the PPA model was that the teachers were denied the opportunity to observe and thus further their music professional development. Broadly, local Music Education Hubs were not reported to have provided music in-service education for Reception teachers. Finally, it was noted that funding cuts for key early years services resulted in fewer relevant and appropriate INSET opportunities being available for early years` practitioners.

In contrast, two positive examples of supportive and good CPD practice were identified. The first referenced the ongoing work of a local Independent Music Education Consultant with whom private arrangements had been made to access music CPD. Second, the music teacher explained her innovative approach to the delivery of music in-service training within her School Leader in Education role, funded by the local Music Education Hub, which emphasised the added dimension of 'in situ` support.

Participants offered their recommendations regarding the way forward for continuing professional development in music. Progression in music learning was identified as an area of need. However, one Reception teacher commented that attending in-service courses was not necessarily the answer. The opportunity to observe an expert practitioner in action would be her preferred mode of in-service support in order to boost her confidence. The second recommendation proposed that it would be more useful for an Early Years specialist to demonstrate good practice, who had experience of teaching music under similar constraints, such as limited time and few resources.

It would be fair to sum that the findings from the eight Reception teacher interviews have identified a number of factors, creating a complex picture of issues and concerns, which result in varying levels of teacher confidence, skills, knowledge and

understanding with regard to facilitating musical learning and development in the Reception Year.

These qualitative findings will be taken forward and triangulated with the quantitative data analyses, as well as the relevant literature in the next, discursive chapter. This process of triangulation, in addition to viewing the findings through the conceptual lens offered by the hermeneutical theoretical framework, will enable both data sets to be considered from multiple perspectives and thus integrated into a coherent whole. The aim is to both respond to the four research questions, as well as offer recommendations to address the research problem. Namely, to try to reconcile the possible disconnect between children`s musical competence and agency, with the potential lack of confidence, knowledge and understanding on the part of the teacher.

# Chapter 11: Discussion

## 11.1 Introduction

Teacher confidence to facilitate children's musical learning and development in the Reception Year at school provided the focus of enquiry for this thesis. A theoretical framework was developed, grounded in the iterative and dialogical processes of hermeneutic philosophy, incorporating the principles of interpretative understanding. The framework emerged from a series of chapters reviewing the literature from two contrasting perspectives. First, of the child, exploring musical development in infancy; early childhood, social, emotional and communicative musical practices; as well as young children's 'musicking'. Topics comprising: early childhood education; teacher confidence, musical identity and self-efficacy; as well as initial teacher education and continuing professional development helped inform the second perspective, of the Reception class teacher. The aim was to bridge the disconnect, to understand the issues and to identify the most appropriate means of supporting the teachers, with a view to a sustained amelioration of the musical engagement experience of both parties.

Four research questions emerged from this iterative, dialogical process:

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

This chapter brings together the emergent quantitative and qualitative data, cross referencing the findings with the literature, in order to respond to these four research questions. A summary overview of findings completes each section. Findings were compared and contrasted with research evidence reviewed in the relevant body of literature and then clustered in groups, categorised under the headings: (1) Concur – no change; (2) Concur – with a contemporary 'twist'; (3) Contradict; (4) Concern - further investigation required. A similar process completes the chapter, for the findings are interrogated with reference to the hermeneutical theoretical framework. The iterative nature of these analytical, evaluative and reflective dialogical processes of

abductive inquiry serve to aid reliability and validity. The aim is for the inference quality of the study findings and conclusions to be transferable to other settings and contexts.

## 11.2 Research question 1: Musical activity in the Reception class

The first research question focused on the nature of the musical experiences and opportunities children might encounter in the Reception classroom. The four areas of discussion comprised musical routines; music for learning; musical environments and provocations; as well as teacher observations of spontaneous musical play.

### 11.2.1 Music and the daily routine

The literature reports that musical activities can be interwoven into the routine of the school day (Trainor, 1996; Trehub et al., 1997; Nakata & Trehub, 2004; Addressi, 2009). Music can be used as a transition between activities, accompany routines such as snack time, as well as provide thought provoking pre-assembly `listening` music, or calming soundtracks whilst eating in the dining room (Honig, 1995; Hallam et al., 2002; Hildebrandt, 1998; Lee & Welch, 2017). Indeed, children and staff congregate together for the daily `carpet` time session which offers further opportunities for collective music making (Hildebrandt, 1998; Naughton & Lines, 2013). These references imply that children of Reception class age (EYFS2) may be immersed in an environment that is imbued with a musical ethos. The study fieldwork explored this notion of music integrated into the daily routine from the perspectives of: (1) opportunities for collective singing; (2) use of musical signals for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention; (3) musical activities at `carpet` time.

The quantitative data reported that children in the Reception classes of the majority of the respondents experienced singing as part of their musical routine some days, or every day of the week. Three quarters of the teachers reported that children sang in assembly either some days or every day. Two thirds sang greeting/farewell songs with their children and three quarters of the teachers reported singing instructions for tidying up/lining up/gathering /gaining attention. Although, using instrumental sounds for this purpose was more common practice, whilst the use of recorded music for communicating intent was the least. Musical activities were found to be incorporated into the `carpet` time experience. Virtually all of the respondents sang with their

children during this session, either some days or every day. Dancing was also a regular, popular activity. However, children were less likely to engage in instrumental play or listening activities at `carpet` time.

Further to the statistical analyses of the four participant variables (EYFS trained; length of teaching experience; music CPD experience; and musician), the Mann-Whitney U test reported the statistically significant result that the more recently trained teachers (n=21) were more likely to encourage listening to recorded music as a carpet time activity (U = 152; p = 0.48). An intriguing finding, worthy of further deliberation, whilst not statistically significant, references the notion that the self-identifying musically accomplished Reception class teachers were less likely to include musical activities in the daily routine.

Three of the eight interviewees described how they incorporated music into the web and weave of the school day. The purposes or functions of these activities included: (1) singing wake-up, greeting and tidy up songs (Elizabeth); (2) using recorded music as a signal and an accompaniment for tidying up (Claire); (3) to change activity (Elizabeth); and (4) to listen to recorded songs to accompany snack time (Frances).

Communicating through musical means, reported above, is also evidenced in this study. Elizabeth offered an example:

When it's time to do something, I put a different sort of music on and then you don't have to explain, you don't have to use your voice anymore" (Elizabeth).

Thus, both the quantitative and qualitative data findings echo the literature in the respect of the notion that Reception class teachers can weave a musical ethos into the everyday classroom experience. However, the data also records that this is not universal.

Music making, by its very nature, is an engaging and/or socialising activity which is beneficial for children's psychological health and well-being, as well as for supporting good physical development (Custodero, Britto, Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Overy, 2013; Chanda & Levitin, 2013). Authors such as Ilari and Gluschkof (2009), as well as Niland (2015) and Ilari (2016), report on the interactive quality of singing and the contribution it can make to creating a perception of belonging, a fundamental human need. This has been evidenced in the Reception classroom. For, the daily, topical `Wake-up` action song, employed routinely by one participant teacher serves a dual purpose. It acts as a greeting song, the children acknowledge each other, but also as a



signal that `it's now time for learning` (Elizabeth). Thus, this reported social action of communal singing offers a feeling of welcome and encourages a sense of belonging.

The power of song has been evidenced both in the fieldwork and in the literature to make a positive contribution to the ethos, as well as the social and emotional wellbeing of the children the Reception class. To sum, the act of singing helps daily routines to be established through the cyclical repetition of actions and events, offering behaviour management procedures, with a view to aiding socialisation as well (Addressi, 2009; Overy, 2013; Barrett, 2009). Second, as a means of communication, singing helps to define group sociocultural values by contributing to a class ethos and engendering a sense of group unity, thus, creating traditions which have a significant part to play in enculturation (Addressi, 2009; Gillen et al., 2007; Barrett, 2009; Smidt, 2010; Chen-Hafteck & Mang, 2012; Overy, 2013). Finally, the power of singing has been evidenced to create feelings of attachment, connection and belonging with both peers and adults (Addressi, 2009; Custodero, 2006; Kim & Kemple, 2011). In this sense, music is being used in an instrumental, functional way, demonstrating an extrinsic value of music. This theme segues to the next section which explores how musical activities were harnessed to accomplish curricular objectives across the learning areas.

### 11.2.2 Learning through music

Learning through music provides the second area for discussion, responding to the first research question. Questionnaire data analyses record that Reception class teachers used music to enrich, enhance or scaffold learning across the curriculum. A clear majority of respondents indicated that music activities were integrated into all the Specific and Prime areas of learning. Personal and Social Education was the notable exception (56%), resulting in a more divided response from the respondents. This finding was surprising, given that the literature reports the social and pro-social development benefits of music (Williams et al., 2015). To expand on this theme, co-operative music play facilitates the development of social skills such as patience, sharing, negotiating, turn-taking, self-advocacy as well as consideration of others before self (Tarnowski, 1999; Ginsburg, 2007; Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006). Furthermore, musical engagement can contribute to emotional well-being by boosting feelings of self-confidence, encouraging self-expression to develop, as well as notions of motivation, perseverance and determination. Finally, musical play may “offer

positive experiences that allow the child to build self-esteem while taking risks” (Tarnowski, 1999, p. 28).

The nature of the musical activities employed to enhance or scaffold the Specific and/or Prime areas of learning was also explored. Singing and vocal activities appeared to predominate across five learning areas, apart from Physical Development where dance was the more significant activity. Listening to recorded music featured most prominently in the EAD learning area. A statistically significant finding reported that the more experienced Reception teachers were more likely to include music Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support the children’s learning (2-sided Fisher’s Exact test;  $p = 0.024$ ). Although, in general musical activities incorporating ICT and/or playing with instruments or other soundmakers were least likely to be employed by the survey respondents to enrich or support cross curricular learning. A second statistically significant finding reported that the experienced group of Reception class teachers were more likely to use instruments/soundmakers to support learning in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Fisher Test;  $p$ -value of 0.019).

The interviewees also commented on how music can be used as a vehicle to scaffold learning in diverse ways (Gillian, Elizabeth). This theme was further developed by Beatrice who introduced the notion of how music can be seen to support children with specific needs, describing the power of song over speech. Combining these views with the aforementioned quantitative data, more specifically noting the high number of responses from Reception class teachers recording their use of musical activities to scaffold knowledge and understanding in Communication and Language, as well as Literacy (77% and 82% respectively), prompts further investigation.

Searching the literature, music making for the purposes of language acquisition and development was often found to be classified within the intervention category. Particularly, for children identified as being at risk of developmental delay (Overy, 2000; 2013; Pitts, 2014; 2016); or Speech and Language Impaired (SLI) (Corriveau et al., 2007; Corriveau & Goswami, 2009; Cumming et al., 2015). Studies exploring the impact of music intervention programmes for children with communication and language difficulties include the ‘Soundplay’ project (Pitts, 2016) and the SALT action

research music project (2018)<sup>39</sup>, in Norfolk. A two-year mixed methods study, the SALTMusic project, funded by the children's music charity Youth Music, involved 93 children experiencing "a transformative pedagogy which marries speech and language development practice with music" (Pitt & Arculus, 2018, p. 10).

Neuroscientific research findings add substance to this thread, suggesting that "language and music overlap in important ways in the brain" (Patel, 2003, p. 674). Indeed, Kraus & Chandrasekaran (2010) present the 'near transfer theory' that active musical engagement can aid the development of auditory listening skills, essential to speech processing. Similarly, several studies have identified that metrical structure is central to both music and speech, as it contributes to the salience of prosody in language (Huss et al., 2011; Cason & Schon, 2012; Goswami et al., 2013; Bhide et al., 2013).

Research studies report that underlying musical issues such as 'temporal processing', rhythm perception and metrical structure are contributory factors to the difficulties some children experience with communication and language, as well as literacy (Overy, 2000). Intervention strategies based on multi-modal rhythmic entrainment are reported to make a positive impact (Goswami, 2012; Gromko, 2005; Cason & Schon, 2012; Goswami et al., 2013;). In this respect, Huss et al., (2011) suggest that:

...rhythmic co-ordination activities in children, for example singing or dancing to music, or making large motor movements in response to the stress beats of syllables, or clapping out the rhythms in metrical poetry or nursery rhymes, may have previously unsuspected benefits for language development (Huss et al., 2011, p. 686).

Thus, the literature appears to corroborate the notion that multi-modal music making activities, such as rhythmic entrainment, practising gross motor skills using instruments, chanting, singing, as well as playground skipping and clapping games (Goswami, 2013), can support children with speech and language difficulties and that the Reception year may present a window of opportunity for this to occur.

To sum, it can be seen that further to the functional use of music as a pedagogical tool to scaffold learning in the Prime and Specific areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, music can also serve to support children identified as being at risk of developmental delay. It is interesting to note that music intervention strategies were not employed in the schools of the eight interview participants. However, an informal internet search of

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<sup>39</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.priorycentre.co.uk/children-and-families/SALTmusic/welcome.html>

the music hub websites of the seven proximal counties referenced in this study issued the result that just one local music service offered such a music intervention programme<sup>40</sup>.

Elizabeth further developed the theme of the potential therapeutic functions of music, by sharing her view that some children with behavioural needs may have a music intelligence and that the opportunity to engage in appropriate musical activities might go some way to addressing these children`s needs. The literature offers some support for this notion, as de Vries (2011) reported on the therapeutic impact of a drumming circle thoroughly engaging pupils renowned for being disruptive. Another advocate of this view emerged during a Skype interview (20.02.2018) with Josie, a trained music therapist, managing the early childhood provision for a music hub in a county elsewhere in the country. Josie reflected on recorded observations of the inclusive nature of the music making and movement workshops, resulting in very positive contributions from children with particular social and emotional needs. Josie also referenced the `Outcomes Star`<sup>41</sup> framework in the course of the conversation. Described as a visual, child-centred, holistic and evidence-based tool, the `Outcomes Star` is designed to explore, support and measure attributes such as contribution, confidence and communication, demonstrating the `Journey of Change` as a result of engaging in programmes such as music.

Elizabeth believed that the issue of inclusivity and support for children with behavioural needs should be pursued, and that perhaps `Pupil Premium`<sup>42</sup> funding should be targeted to help support these children. Purposed with raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers, this notion segues into the domain of social enterprise programmes. An informal internet search highlighted a common theme of music programmes employed for this purpose, that is the intention of trying to redress the balance for vulnerable children growing up in challenging circumstances. `Behavioural issues` qualify as a category of

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<sup>40</sup> Accelerate!™ Retrieved from: <https://www.lincsmusicservice.org/services-for-schools/secondary-music-offer/standalone-products/accelerate>

<sup>41</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

<sup>42</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

challenge (The National Foundation for Youth Music<sup>43</sup>). Yet, to date, no projects purporting to meet this specific challenge have been located.

A primary goal for both national (funded by Youth Music)<sup>44</sup> and international group vocal and instrumental projects (e.g. El Sistema) is one of social change. These programmes endeavour to contribute to social cohesiveness and to create a sense of community, particularly in low socioeconomic, deprived and possibly dangerous areas. Programmes targeting vulnerable children living in urban areas of socio-economic deprivation or in rural isolation include a diverse range of music making projects such as `In Harmony` (Lewis, et al., 2011); `Daisi`s Music Start`<sup>45</sup>, `Soundcastle`<sup>46</sup> project, `Music for Change 2015-2018` Early Years project in an area of "multiple deprivation" in London (Knight et al., 2017).

Social enterprise projects such as the internationally renowned El Sistema orchestral programme which originated in Venezuela, could be viewed as more in alignment with Elizabeth`s views on the potential of music. Notably, children as young as two or three (with parent participation), or more usually five years of age, can enrol in El Sistema. Continued political and financial support for more than forty years has contributed to the success of the orchestral programme, envisioned by Jose Antonio Ebreu in 1975 (Lesniak, 2012). Ebreu`s aim was to impact on the aspirations of the young people, to encourage them to pursue a better economic and social situation for themselves (Hopkins et al., 2017).

Thus, further to Elizabeth raising the notion of using Pupil Premium funding to support disadvantaged children engage in musical activities, these exemplars illustrate the potential of such music programmes to realise social change. However, caution must be exercised, as concerns arising from individual short-term projects and challenges for sustainability have been reported in the literature (Bamford & Glinkowski, 2009; Lamont et al., 2012).

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<sup>43</sup> The National Foundation for Youth Music <http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/what-we-do/challenging-circumstances>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.soft-touch.org.uk/2013/03/east-midlands-music-projects-get-boost-grants-320000-youth-music-charity/>.

<sup>45</sup> <http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/daisis-musicstart-early-years-music-resources>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/taking-off/types/social-enterprise>.

To conclude the discussion on the functional use of music within the Reception classroom, it can be seen that music can serve a myriad of purposes. These findings can be related to Besler's (1995) four descriptors for how music (and the arts) are integrated into school life, referenced in Chapter 5.4. Of note is the concern that music can play a subservient role to enhance and enrich the curriculum and serve alternative extrinsic purposes, yet not necessarily contribute to creative and cognitive musical development (Bresler, 1993, 1995; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Hash, 2010; De Vries, 2011). The import of the intrinsic value of music must not be underestimated. The additional benefits must not outweigh its inherent worth, for the "goals of music education to be nonmusical" (Lee, 2009, p. 358). In view of the myriad of extrinsic functions and instrumental purposes of music evidenced within the Reception classroom, an exploration of the 'co-equal-cognitive' style of music follows (Bresler, 1995). For, as Morin's student teachers also noted: "music is a unique human experience that should be valued 'for its own sake'" (Morin, 2004, p. 9).

### 11.2.3 Musical environments and provocations

The third area of discussion, in response to the first research question, explores notions of musical indoor, outdoor and/or woodland environments and the provision of resources, or provocations, to stimulate musical play. The provision of activities to stimulate learning in an outdoor area is key to early years pedagogy (QCA/DfEE, 2000; DCSF, 2008). The literature refers to 'music centers', 'music corners' and 'music areas', created to encourage children to engage in child-centred musical play (Dorman, 1990; Morin, 2001; Littleton, 1998; Gluschankof, 2002, 2005). The Italian Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education highlights the importance of the physical, sensory environment or 'set', by suggesting it is considered to be the 'third teacher' (Hanna, 2014; Bond, 2015; You et al., 2015).

Children could access a sound area every day in three out of four classrooms and instruments were available to play only in about half of the classrooms every day. This area was located outside, in just under half of the classrooms, whilst a similar proportion of teachers provided music areas both inside and outdoors. An interviewee reflected upon the provision of a box of instruments outside in the play area, explaining that the children could bring them inside, but they might be relocated into a cloakroom area if the music making became too noisy (Hilary). Elizabeth added to this thread, explaining that musical activities were not provided indoors all the time, since music

played at a high volume could become a sensory issue for those children in the class, impaired with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

A questionnaire respondent offered a further comment on the topic of the indoor/outdoor debate with regard to the location of resources for musical learning. In this case, limited indoor space constrained opportunities for creating dedicated curriculum areas within the classroom. Isabelle, a recently qualified teacher experienced the converse problem. The EYFS accommodation was considered to be too large, so the area for child-initiated music provision was often 'closed'. During the course of her interview, Claire described the location of her outdoor provision for child-initiated music, linking it with the 'stage' area, adding that there was no specific identifiable music area within the classroom. A final reflective interview comment on the provision of musical environments invites further study "I'm not sure how ... I'd enhance it more...I've never actually seen a music area in an early year's classroom" (Claire). These findings coincide with the research literature which suggest that opportunities for children to be able to choose musical play as an activity in a stimulating, resource rich environment may be limited (Addison, 1991; Morin, 2001; Berger & Cooper, 2003; Marsh & Young, 2006).

The literature recommends that musically enriched environments, enhanced by the use of props, toys and instruments, should be offered to children to stimulate quality musical play (Niland, 2009; Davies, 1986; Berger & Cooper, 2003; Marsh & Young, 2006; Stephen, 2010; Morin, 2001; Koops, 2012). This notion was pursued with questions seeking to discover other, related resources that teachers provided that might encourage and support imaginary, creative and kinaesthetic child-initiated music making. Resources such as dressing up clothes were mostly available every day and a stage a little less often. Children could access an audio player for their musical play either some or every day in two thirds of cases. Although a constraint for using electrical items for outdoor play, determined by the weather, was identified by a questionnaire respondent. Findings from the questionnaire data analyses recorded that children had access to a computer or iPad or were able to engage in musical technological activities some or every day for just over half of the respondents. Although, children were much less likely to be able to use a microphone for music play. Some curious findings emerged from the cross-tabulation of the participant variables. In particular, the 'musicians' group of Reception teachers appeared less likely than

their counterparts to provide a `sound` area, nor soundmakers for children to engage in musical play every day.

The topic of providing resources to stimulate musical play arose during the interviews, whilst conversation centred around `constraints and value`. Half of the participants reflected on the difficulties of ensuring opportunities for children to engage in music play, due to external pressures created by school performance tables,<sup>47</sup> as well as the school inspection process (Office for Standards in Education).<sup>48</sup> Two recently qualified teachers specifically reported on the pressures within the curriculum, emphasising the additional allocation of time for maths and English. On the subject of `fitting it in`, Dawn, a more experienced teacher, added the notion that music was not valued as it might be. Elizabeth described how children in her class miss out on P.E. and creative subjects such as music, due to the level of intervention required to reinforce their core subject learning. Elizabeth also commented on the internal pressures she encountered in her current setting, identifying a need for sufficient support staff to help manage “a high proportion of children with challenging behaviour”. Similarly, Elizabeth reported that she would prefer to offer an outside musical activity, but, as there were “five or six children who would need an eye kept on them with those resources”, she felt reluctant to do so.

Thus, the interviewees highlighted some of the constraints, both external and internal, that impacted on their perceived ability to provide sufficient musical opportunities for the children. The pressure to meet externally imposed attainment targets, as well as concerns over accountability and attainment, is also recognised in the literature (Goouch, 2008; Martlew, 2011; Maynard et al., 2013; Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016). Similar issues such as acceptable levels of music `noise` with its associated disruption, as well as concern that instruments and other resources may be at risk of damage are also reported (Tarnowski, 1999; Addison, 1991). It seems that these concerns persist more than two decades later in some Reception classrooms.

The Reception class teacher can also be viewed as a resource. The generic role of the adult in the early childhood phase is described to comprise such skills as modelling, scaffolding learning, sustained shared thinking, open-ended questioning, as well as

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>



providing formative feedback (Sylva et al., 2004; Martlew et al., 2011; Stephen, 2010). More specific to music, Berger and Cooper (2003) found that enhanced musical play occurs when adults value, encourage and are perhaps willing to engage in the playful musical activity. Also, research studies interpret the musical role of the adult in terms of active listening (Young, 1995; 2003; Pitt & Arculus, 2018), as well as imitative play and “contributory play-partnering” (Parker, 2013, p. 3).

The questionnaire data demonstrated that the responsibility for planning music learning and development tended to lie with the Reception teachers in almost two thirds of cases. Although sometimes a specialist school member of staff or, less often, a visiting music teacher fulfilled this role. A slightly contrasting picture emerged when the respondents were also asked to reflect on the planning and preparation of the stimuli and resources needed for the child-initiated musical learning activities. The participant Reception teachers offered further insight on this topic.

A variety of music input was evidenced in the course of the eight interviews. This mostly consisted of opportunities for child-initiated learning designed by the class teacher, with some formal adult input in some cases. In the independent school, an in-house music specialist taught the Reception class. At the same time, music was incorporated into the daily life by the class teacher. A recent development for another primary school included employing two, part-time specialists to teach music during PPA time to the combined Reception/Year 1 class once a fortnight. PPA refers to the time given to classroom teachers to facilitate ‘Planning, Preparation and Assessment’ (DfES, 2004; NUT, 2005). The children were reported to enjoy the singing, but the class teacher expressed concerns about the possible lack of curriculum structure (Hilary). In a fourth school, a musically confident HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) had been teaching music to the Reception children “...probably once every three weeks” (Isabelle).

To sum, a variety of practice was evidenced in these individual comments concerning music in school Reception classes, perhaps raising questions of equality of opportunity and access, as well as quality. Some schools had a music teacher on the staff, but this was rare. Some schools employed a visiting music teacher or musician to teach music during PPA time throughout the school. This did not necessarily extend to the reception class for a number of reasons, including financial or timetabling constraints, and/or the view that a particular pedagogical expertise was required for the Early Years. These

visiting music specialists could be sourced through the county music service or local Music Education Hub.<sup>49</sup> Alternatively, schools could contract music specialists by private arrangement.

Interrogating these data in the context of the literature suggests that these findings add to the specialist/non-specialist debate (Mills, 1989; Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000), by contributing more modern day monitoring and accountability dimensions such as quality, effectiveness of teaching strategies as well as musical learning, development and achievement (Ofsted, 2012). These data add to concerns about the levels of expertise and experience of the music facilitators. For, the literature recommends a sound knowledge and understanding of the curriculum as well as child development (TDA, 2008; Sylva et al., 2004; Ofsted, 2009; Bond, 2015). In some instances, the introduction of the PPA initiative has removed the Reception teacher, the adult who knows the children best (Mills, 1989), from being involved in facilitating musical learning. A simultaneous consequence is the loss of `upskilling` opportunities resulting from the practice of teaching, as well as further professional development opportunities (Hallam et al., 2009). Similarly, difficulties monitoring the equal balance, as well as coordinating a coherent provision of child and adult-initiated activities may be observed (Sylva et al., 2004; DfES, 2007; DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2012, 2014, 2017). This notion segues into the last area of discussion responding to the first research question.

#### 11.2.4 Children`s spontaneous music play

The final area of discussion relates to spontaneous musical play. In contrast to the behavioural literature reporting on musical levels of development by ages and stages (Moog, 1976; Gruhn, 2002; Tafuri, 2008; Welch, 2006), a vast body of ethnographic research explores the notion of children`s spontaneous music play within a range of situational, social, environmental and cultural contexts (Campbell, 1998; Pond, 2014; Sundin, 1997; Young, 2002; Custodero, 2006; Custodero et al., 2016; Tafuri, 2008; Koops, 2014; Barrett, 2006).

Three particular characteristics of child-initiated music play referenced in the literature, comprise: (1) an emphasis on “process rather than on product” (Addison, 1991, p.

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-1>

207); (2) music play is bound by notions of choice, control, pleasure, a deep voluntary engagement, as well as being intrinsically motivating (Addison, 1991; Littleton, 1998; Tarnowski, 1999; Niland, 2009); (3) improvisatory music play by its very nature, is creative, exploratory and experimental (Countryman, 2014; Marsh & Young, 2006; Alcock, 2008; Niland, 2009).

The questionnaire respondents offered their observations of a variety of child-initiated musical play activities: (1) two thirds of the teachers reported that at least half or some of the children in their classes were observed singing whilst engaged in child-initiated play, and that this occurred either some or most days (2) singing and dancing during `free play` time was predominant; (3) an equal mix of children engaging in self-initiated instrumental play was observed; (4) the majority of teachers noted that children tried to recreate tunes they knew some days; (5) almost all the respondents had observed children electing to compose their own music some days. These data do not appear to entirely support the observations recorded in the research literature that adults may not notice children`s spontaneous music play (Sundin, 1997; Gluschankof, 2005). It could be said that the EYFS emphasis on observing children`s play has been helpful here, with the caveat that Reception teachers still need to value and understand the inherent musical qualities in order to extend and develop children`s music play (Campbell, 1998; Gluschankof, 2005).

The Reception class teachers were also asked to comment on their observations of gender preference for these musical activities (Custodero et al., 2016; Sundin, 1997). One example of a gender bias was reported by less than half of the teachers, who commented that it was `mostly girls` who engaged in singing and dancing. However, just over half of the respondents reported that an equal mix of boys and girls enjoyed singing. The `equal mix` response also prevailed for the activities of engaging in self-initiated instrumental play, as well as music technology, where available (just over half of classes). Whilst most respondents indicated no gender bias for recreating tunes, a slight skew was noted for the response `mostly girls` in just over a quarter of cases. A similar distribution was observed for children electing to compose their own music. Namely, most teachers observed an equal mix of boys, with a slight skew towards girls engaging in compositional tasks.

Referencing the relevant body of literature on the subject of early childhood musical preferences. Custodero et al., (2016) also report a lack of gender bias, whilst observing 69 recorded episodes of children`s vocal play from infancy to five years of age. This finding supports the research evidence recorded twenty years earlier that: “The spontaneous musical activity during free play ... showed no significant differences between girls and boys” (Sundin, 1997, p. 54).

Research studies that have explored the nature of children`s spontaneous music play, report evidence of (1) improvisatory vocalisations (Koops, 2014); (2) musical characteristics of children`s invented song (Barrett, 2006), as well as (3) spatial structures, and time-based structures observed in improvised instrumental play (Young, 1995; 2003; 2008; Gluschankof, 2002; 2005; Parker, 2013). These findings broadly echo those recorded by some of the earliest music researchers such as `pot-pourri` songs (Moog, 1976) and the two-note imitative chant, based on a descending minor third interval (Pond, 2014). Thus, the research evidence suggests that spontaneous music play is not a new phenomenon, that it could be considered an intuitive human response, one that may go unnoticed. However, child-initiated music play needs to be recognised, valued and encouraged by adults (Barrett, 2006). A related theme references the notion that children`s spontaneous musical behaviours should not be judged according to the conventional standards of the Western classical tradition nor the traditional skills-based practices and, performance biases of adult recreative music making (Barrett, 2006). For, as Gluschankof (2005), amongst others, note that children`s music play is experienced as an embodied holistic, multi-sensory event.

#### 11.2.5 Findings overview in response to research question 1:

What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?

To sum, drawing the threads together from the four areas of discussion in response to the first research question, comprised topics such as musical routine, music for learning, musical environment, as well as teacher observations of spontaneous musical play. Triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data with the research literature has evidenced findings that can be classified into four categories:

The first group concur with the literature, noting no change, e.g., (1) music was incorporated into daily routines, but not universally; (2) music was overwhelmingly employed to enrich, enhance and scaffold other curricular learning; (3) constraints of acceptable level noise and risk of damage prevail; (4) music input mostly took the form of C.I. Learning; (5) children were observed to sing, initiate other kinds of musical activity, sing and dance, recreate tunes they knew and/or create their own tunes on the instruments, during `free play` time; (6) no significant gender differences between girls and boys C.I. play were noted.

The second category of findings are described to 'concur', with a 'contemporary twist'. The following notions are classified in this group: external constraints (e.g., accountability and attainment) impacting on learning opportunities; potential sensory overload for ASD children; the class music teacher was mostly responsible for the music curriculum, sometimes an in-house music specialist, or, less often, a visiting music teacher (PPA).

Just one finding conflicts with the literature. Namely, adults were observant of children's music making.

Findings of concern, perhaps needing further investigation comprise: (1) the benefits of music to scaffold PSE; (2) the therapeutic power of music to support children with SEND; (3) children not receiving their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum including music; (4) Singing and other activities to include some measure of musical learning and development; (5) music curriculum and delivery to be monitored for quality, whether responsibility lies in house with generalists or with `bought in` specialists; (6) monitoring the equal balance and coherent provision of child and adult-initiated activities; (7) upskilling teachers' understanding of the musical qualities within children`s musical play, as well as how to develop them; (8) broaden the base of understanding of music beyond Western conventions and performance oriented, music reproduction, skills-based practices; (9) greater understanding and acknowledgment of children`s musical competencies and the cultural capital they bring with them; (10) greater understanding with concomitant embedding in practice of child-centred musical pedagogies.

## 11.3 Research question 2: Musical learning and development

The second research question sought to learn how Reception class teachers plan for musical learning and development, as well as perceived levels of confidence with regard to a range of pedagogical activities. The questionnaire explored themes such as staffing, curricular frameworks, differentiation and progression or 'next steps' (DCSF, 2008), as well as formative and summative approaches to the assessment and observational recording of children's musical achievements.

### 11.3.1 Planning for musical learning and development

The non-statutory guidance document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' (Early Education, 2012) is designed to enable early childhood practitioners to "understand and support each individual child's development pathway" (p. 1). The guidance is structured into three themes: (1) 'A unique child: observing what a child is learning'; (2) 'Positive relationships: what adults could do' and (3) 'Enabling environments: What adults could provide' (p. 2).

Just over two thirds of the questionnaire respondents reported that they did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists. Nevertheless, with the exception of one, all respondents felt confident to lead and/or model singing activities in their Reception class. Over three quarters of the teachers felt they had sufficient musical knowledge to successfully engage in singing activities, although, slightly less exhibited the same confidence with leading and/or modelling instrumental activities. Inferential analyses were undertaken by cross referencing the participant variable 'Musically accomplished singer/instrumentalist' (n=12) with all four dependent variables on this subject. Two findings proved significant, that of 'musically confident to lead/model singing activities in class' and 'musically confident to lead/model instrumental activities in class'. Statistically significant results were noted further to applying the two-sided Fisher's Exact test. P-values of 0.036 for singing and 0.003 for instrumental activities were reported, confirming that the musically accomplished respondents expressed greater levels of confidence for these activities.

Further to the discussion above concerning the personnel facilitating music in the Reception classroom, data reported from cross referencing this theme with the participant variables from the questionnaire analyses recorded that it was twice as

likely for a visiting or school music teacher to plan the musical aspect of the Expressive arts and design learning area (EAD) in schools with EYFS trained teachers.

Furthermore, the more experienced, as well as the musically accomplished Reception teachers were also more likely to plan, lead and model musical learning for EAD than their counterparts.

There was a fairly even split between those Reception teachers who followed a structured framework (44%) and those who did not (54%). For those who did follow a curriculum plan, it was more likely to be topic-based (33%), rather than book or resource led. A statistically significant finding for this topic demonstrates that the musically accomplished respondents (n=9:12) were more likely to follow a structured curriculum framework for music than their colleagues (2-sided Fisher's Exact test;  $p = 0.14$ ). An invitation for further comment on planning for musical learning and development for individual children prompted such responses as 'following children's interests and ideas' (11:39 respondents), as well as, looking for gaps in knowledge and plotting 'next steps' (8:39).

A variety of music practice was evidenced in the course of the eight interviews. This mostly consisted of opportunities for child-initiated learning designed by the class teacher, with some formal adult input in some cases. A mixed set of interview responses were presented with regard to questions on the subject of planning for musical learning. These ranged from 'none' (Isabelle), through 'it's more ad hoc' (Frances), to a detailed comment on the musical contribution to the creative curriculum (Gillian). Similarly, there did not appear to be a strong emphasis on the 'In the moment planning' (ITMP) approach to early years pedagogy, referenced in Chapter 5.3 (Ephgrave, 2018). Furthermore, there was no evidence to suggest that any of the questionnaire respondents, nor interview participants were following any one particular methodological approach such as Kodaly, Dalcroze or Orff, with its associated philosophy, pedagogy and understanding of a music tradition, established in the early or mid-nineteenth century (Young, 2018).

### 11.3.2 Planning for differentiation and progression in musical learning

The statutory framework documents (DfES, 2007; DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2012, 2014, 2017) do not use the term differentiation specifically, however, it could be considered implicit in the directives concerning teachers taking "a flexible approach that responds quickly to children's learning and development needs" (DfES, 2007, p.7) and "that children

learn in different ways and at different rates” (DCSF, 2008, p. 9; DfE, 2014, p. 6). Differentiating by task, support, and outcome<sup>50</sup>, expanded to include notions of mixed ability grouping, adapting pace, as well as differentiating by resource and dialogue<sup>51</sup> are strategies employed to support individualised learning and development. Furthermore, the statutory frameworks (DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2012, 2014, 2017) reference the learning environment as an important factor in responding to the individual developmental needs of children:

... children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs (DfE, 2012, p. 3).

More recently, Pascal, Bertram and Rouse (2018) reference “being mindful of differentiation and children’s individual needs” (p. 39). Conversely, Allingham (2014) proposes an opened ended, the ‘sky is the limit’ approach, which encourages children’s thinking to be challenged. This outward looking interpretation of the notion of differentiation can be aligned with scaffolding children’s learning to within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as promulgated by Vygotsky (1934), referenced in Chapter 5.4.

Making the assumption that the remit of the Reception teacher is to facilitate the individual development in all the learning areas of the foundation stage, constraints notwithstanding, then it might be reasonable to presume that children should also experience the opportunity to progress their musical learning. A divergence of confidence, knowledge and practice on this subject came to light in the course of data collection and analyses.

Although teachers, were generally confident about planning musical opportunities for their classes, they acknowledged that the same level of confidence did not extend to the activities of progression and differentiation. In nearly two thirds of cases, respondents reported moderate or less confidence in planning for sequential musical learning or planning appropriate musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children in their Reception classes. Inferential analyses were undertaken by cross referencing the participant variable ‘Musically accomplished singer/instrumentalist’ (n=12) with all four dependent variables. Two findings proved significant, that of

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-centres/centres/centre-for-inclusive-education/send-in-initial-teacher-training-project/pdfs/send-reflective-journal-part-2>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeas andResources/Methodsof Differentiation intheClassroom.aspx>



`musically confident to lead/model singing activities in class` and `musically confident to lead/model instrumental activities in class`. Statistically significant results were noted further to applying the two-sided Fisher`s Exact test. P-values of 0.036 for singing and 0.003 for instrumental activities were reported, confirming that the musically accomplished respondents expressed greater levels of confidence for these activities.

The interview comments also reinforced the quantitative data given above on this topic. Five of the participants shared their experiences: “I don`t think that we do a lot of differentiation” (Dawn); “I wouldn`t say we necessarily differentiate for music” (Claire); “I don`t think I differentiate my group for going to music” (Elizabeth); Two teachers referenced their practice of differentiation as “through outcome” (Frances and Hilary). A lack of knowledge and confidence to differentiate for varying musical abilities prevailed, too. As Elizabeth and Claire explained: “I don`t think I know enough about that” (Elizabeth); “I don`t know where I would begin” (Claire). Isabelle referenced the omission from her ITE course “... especially at uni ... we didn`t get taught anything to do with differentiating the music” (Isabelle). Conversely, Isabelle continued the conversation by describing the music challenge cards that had been devised for children engaging in child-initiated play: “So, we do differentiate in the continuous provision but when it comes to adult-led teaching, not so much” (Isabelle). Beatrice echoed this notion, by describing the level of support offered to children during their continuous provision.

Contrasting views were evidenced with regards to the support on this topic offered by the non-statutory guidance document `Development Matters` (Early Education, 2012). Claire reported the lack of objectives linked to music to help her make one of the three tiered judgements:

We don`t really get any guidance to say, well a child that can do this, is an emerging child, but a child that can do this is an expected child ... I think it makes differentiation really difficult (Claire).

In contrast, Gillian explained that she uses the `ages and stages` of the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance as the basis for her planning for differentiation in music.

It can be surmised from these comments that the topic of differentiation in music in the Reception Year is one that lacks clarity. This appears to be compounded by the breadth of understanding of the notion of differentiation; the conflicting issues on the subject of whether it is appropriate to differentiate adult-led and/or child-initiated musical learning in the Reception Year; and finally, a gap in understanding and

knowledge with regard to how to differentiate musical learning has been identified by some participating Reception teachers.

In contrast, a much higher proportion of Reception teachers expressed moderate or greater confidence in assessing and reporting, a similar response was given for providing `next steps` guidance for the children in their class. However, these numbers dropped slightly when asked about their confidence to identify, develop and support children who are musically Gifted and Talented (two thirds) or for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (half).

### 11.3.3 Musical progression (`next steps`)

To sum the data reported above, there appears to be a disconnect between knowledge, understanding and practice in planning for differentiation to aid musical learning and development. A similar pattern emerged on the subject of progression in musical learning. The Rumbold Report (DES, 1990) provides a definition of the concept of progression:

Progression is essentially the sequence built into children's learning through curriculum policies and schemes of work so that later learning builds on knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes learned previously (DES, 1990, p. 13).

Progression in children`s learning is also implicit within the statutory frameworks, referenced above, grounded in the statement that children learn in different ways and progress at different rates. Wood and Bennett (2001) discuss the tensions of the inter-relationship between progression in learning, that is, learner-centred and progression in curriculum content, in other words subject based. These authors also acknowledge the individualised patterns of learning development:

There are slow as well as rapid periods of learning, with young children needing opportunities for practice and consolidation (Wood & Bennett, 2001, p. 231).

The quantitative and qualitative data resulting from this study presented a mixed response on the subject of facilitating progression in musical learning. On the one hand, nearly three quarters of the questionnaire respondents indicated moderate or greater confidence in providing `next steps` musical guidance for the children in their class. However, two responses to the open question asking about perceived needs for further continuing professional development (CPD) must be noted. Two Reception class teachers indicated that they would welcome learning more about planning for `next steps` in music, as well as "Understanding the progression of pupil's understanding and the activities to offer in sequence to facilitate best practice" (Anon).

In nearly two thirds of cases, Reception class teachers reported moderate or less confidence in planning for sequential musical learning or planning appropriate musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children in their class. Statistically significant findings, however, indicated that the more recently trained Reception teachers (2000s/2010s) expressed greater confidence to plan for progression in musical learning and development than their more experienced colleagues ( $U=30$ ;  $p=0.001$ ;  $n=21:10$ ). Conversely, the second statistically significant finding on this topic reports that the 'musicians' expressed less confidence than the 'non-musicians' in the respect of planning for musical progression ( $U=250.5$ ;  $p=0.006$ ;  $n=12:27$ ). This intriguing finding is a further contribution to the emerging profile of the 'Reception teacher as musician'.

Some of the concerns raised by the participant Reception teachers during the interviews on the subject of differentiation were also relevant for the topic of musical progression, or 'next steps' (DCSF, 2008). Typically, the interviewees considered that 'next steps' in music were not actively or overtly pursued. This could be due to curriculum overload as described elsewhere, for example, 'it's just another thing to think about', they noted. Similarly, the 'next steps' in reading, writing and maths were considered to be more essential and urgent at this stage. Alternatively, due consideration and understanding of how Reception children might be able to progress the different strands of their musical learning were not always fully realised. Four participants commented on the concept of musical progression in their Reception classes: "It's very lacking" (Isabelle); "I know I don't do enough of it at all" (Frances); "I don't think we're ever so strong on that" (Dawn); and "No, you see, not really now" (Hilary).

Again, Gillian and Claire offered contrasting perspectives with respect to the guidance on 'ages and stages' of learning and development and the Early Learning Goals as outlined in the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' document (Early Education, 2012). Gillian uses the 'ages and stages' to plan for musical progression. Conversely, drawing a comparison with the detailed support for writing, Claire explained "for us to know what they should be doing in order to be making progress in music is very difficult, because it doesn't really lay it out for you" (Claire).

Elizabeth explained her use of "deeper questions", or asking for "adaptations" in other words, using language akin to the principles of 'sustain shared thinking' (Sylva et al., 2004) to help children progress their learning. The techniques of open-ended

questioning, adult modelling and `sustained shared thinking` referenced in the EPPE research project, discussed more fully in Chapter 5, were incorporated into Elizabeth`s practice.

The Ofsted evaluation report (2009) `Making more of music: an evaluation of music in schools 2005/08` recorded that the main weakness music in primary schools was the lack of progress. Indeed, the inspectors evidenced “the extremes in the quality of provision” as well as the lack of understanding amongst teachers regarding “what `making musical progress` looks like” (p. 5). This finding adds weight to earlier theme that Reception teachers may not have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to support the musical development of the children in their care.

#### 11.3.4 Assessing and recording musical achievements

The Statutory Framework (2012) referenced `ongoing` or `formative` assessment, by means of practitioner observations with a view to “shape learning experiences for each child”, to be an “integral part of the learning and development process” (DfE, 2012, p. 10). This process of ongoing or formative assessment aligns with the aims of the `Assessment for Learning Strategy` (DCSF, 2008).

International models of assessment including portfolios documenting a child`s unique learning journey, focused on the process model of learning dispositions rather than outcomes, were described in Chapter 5. The Statutory assessment for 5-year-olds, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), introduced in 2003, revised in 2008 and 2012, was based entirely on teachers` observations and the Characteristics of Effective learning (CoEL). These were intended to provide a `holistic picture` of the child throughout the Foundation Stage. Thus, both formative as well as summative models of assessment are implicit within the EYFS framework, since there is also an expectation of recording outcomes (Chapter 5.6). Music specific guidance to assist teachers with recording musical achievements in EYFS2 is scarce. The `Sounds of Intent` framework (Sol-EY, 2015) and `Musical Development Matters` (Burke, 2018) were also referenced in Chapter 5.6.

Analyses of the questionnaire data report that the Reception class teachers recorded the musical achievements of the children in most cases, with a quarter of Reception teachers also noting that they used an EYFS specific online scheme (mostly

`Tapestry'<sup>52</sup>, an interactive online learning journal) for this purpose. Almost all of the respondents indicated that a key element of the recording process was providing photographic and video evidence, which might be uploaded online. This visual/audio means of recording musical accomplishments was accompanied by written commentaries in almost all cases. At the same time, three quarters of the respondents also indicated that they used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements. Nine out of ten Reception teachers reported that they used these records of achievement for summative reporting. A slightly smaller proportion suggested that these records were used for formative purposes, in other words, planning for further musical learning and development. Almost all respondents reported that they matched their observations with the `Ages and Stages of Development` referenced in the National Guidance.

Some contrasting points of view were offered on the subject of the purpose of observations for informing planning, in response to the invitation for further comment. The cyclical recording and planning process, summed by one questionnaire respondent, noted:

Observations are used to record individual children's achievements and plot out their 'next steps': their ideas are incorporated into the planning for use by the wider group who would also benefit from carrying out similar activities (Anon).

In contrast, another Reception class teacher commented:

We do not use observations of musical learning to inform our planning. We plan what fits in with our topic ideas (Anon).

A third, reflected on current practice, whilst recognising it as an area requiring further professional development:

We respond to individuals through immediate feedback, modelling and suggestions to extend them. We could do more in terms of an observation and planning cycle specifically for music! (Anon).

All eight interviewees used `Tapestry'<sup>53</sup> an online learning journal for logging children`s experience and learning. Teacher observations of the children`s engagement and progress were recorded, with parental contributions, accompanied by photographs and videos capturing those ephemeral musical moments. Ease of access helped teachers upload both short and long, detailed observations, cross referencing them with the

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<sup>52</sup> <https://tapestry.info/>

<sup>53</sup> Foundation Stage Forum Ltd, 2012

`ages and stages` recorded in `Development Matters`, as well as the level the child is working at. Beatrice described this process:

I use the EYFS assessment across the seven areas. So, under the seven areas of learning music will come under EAD... So 40-60+. So, it just uses statements... And then three refinements: emerging, developing and secure (Beatrice).

The interviewees also presented contrary perspectives on the subject of whether the `ages and stages` of the EYFS framework provided sufficient guidance to support the next steps in musical learning. Some participants had commented that the `ages and stages` descriptors, as well as the early learning goal for music outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework were vague and limited. These views suggested that little guidance and support was provided for classroom teachers in the Reception year to aid pedagogical concerns such as planning, differentiation, progression and assessment in music. It is clear that learning and development is a complex and individual process. It is the responsibility of the teacher to use his/her professional judgement, based on observations as part of the formative assessment process, to ascertain where the child lies on the continuum of learning and the best way to progress him/her forward taking into account his/her individual cognitive, social and emotional developmental needs

#### 11.3.5 Findings overview in response to research question 2:

How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?

Drawing the threads together in order to respond to the second research question encompassed themes such as staffing, curricular frameworks, differentiation and progression or `next steps` (DCSF, 2008), as well as formative and summative approaches to the assessment of children`s musical achievement. Triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data with the research literature has evidenced findings that can be classified into four categories.

The first group concur with the literature, noting no change, e.g., (1) Musical activities were mostly planned within topics; (2) Musical respondents were statistically more likely to follow a structured music curriculum framework; (3) Respondents were generally confident about planning musical opportunities however, planning for musical learning was inconsistent among the interview responses; (4) moderate or less confidence in planning for sequential musical learning and/or differentiating musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children.

The findings that concur, with the added impact of contemporary issues include firstly that almost all the Reception teachers used video and/or photographs, as well as written comments to describe and record their observations of children`s musical achievements. Second, one in four respondents also used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements.

Conflicting and contrasting views, indicating formative assessment procedures were not commonly used to develop children`s musical learning did not meet the recommendations recorded in the literature.

Findings implying a cause for concern, warranting closer scrutiny include; (1) the lack of confidence, understanding, knowledge for how to both differentiate, as well as develop children`s next steps in musical learning; (2) the utility and purpose of the `ages and stages` descriptors and ELG for music perceived by most to be vague and limited, providing insufficient guidance to support the next steps in musical learning.

#### 11.4 Research question 3: Musical identity, confidence and self-efficacy

MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2012) discuss the ubiquitous nature of music and the significant role it plays in our lives, suggesting that “music crucially influences our identity” (p. 2). The Reception class teachers shared their musical biographies during the interviews. Listening to music played a significant part for at least half the participants. Three participants shared their enjoyment of live music, conversely, Dawn mentioned that she doesn`t choose to listen to a lot of music. In terms of practical music making, the participants were not keen to admit their involvement, although half of the interviewees experienced practical music making in their formative years. Finally, three participants described the importance of music for them, personally. It is clear that music, the activity of listening in particular (*Cf.* Rickard & Chin, 2017), plays a significant role in the lives of most of the interview participants, their biographies illustrating the place of music in their self-making identity. Hargreaves, MacDonald and Miell (2017) introduced the dual concepts of `Music in identity` (MII) and `Identities in music` (IIM). Almost all the interviewees described very strong IIM, however, these positive music self-identities did not transfer across into their MII. A disconnect becomes apparent, for the most part, between the role of music in these teachers` personal and professional lives, as described below. Further impact on confidence and

perceptions of self-esteem and self-efficacy were also explored. For, as Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald (2002) suggest

*Self-esteem* is the evaluative component of the self, and has both cognitive and emotional aspects: how worthy we think, and feel we are (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002, p. 7–8).

The Reception teachers were invited to consider their musical identity in respect of their levels of confidence with regard to leading, modelling and planning for musical learning in the questionnaire. Just over two thirds of respondents reported that they did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists. However, with the exception of one, all respondents felt confident to lead and/or model singing activities. Despite their enthusiasm for music, sharing their experiences and expressing the significance it had to their way of life, this did not necessarily correlate to positive responses to the relevant questions in the survey, for the eight participants. None of the eight interviewees declared themselves to be a musically accomplished singer or instrumentalist. Only half said they felt musically confident to lead singing and instrumental activities in the classroom. Furthermore, Claire a recently qualified Reception teacher declared her lack of general confidence to lead singing activities. Thus, further to their musical biographies, shared above, the strong personal musical identities expressed by most of these Reception teachers did not always translate into their professional sphere of life.

Stunell (2010) suggests there is a correlation between teacher`s deficit in confidence, with perceived lack of competence and agency:

The teachers ... were all concerned that their practice with regard to music teaching in their classrooms was less skilled and less effective than their teaching of other subjects (Stunell, 2010, p. 97).

Should teachers view themselves as ill-prepared or lacking in competence to teach music, then they may question their self-efficacy, which will impact on their level of confidence, resulting in the self-fulfilling prophecy of underperformance in the classroom. Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of performing effectively to achieve set outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Steele, 2010). Garvis and Pendergast (2010) note that confidence alone is insufficient to validate self-efficacy, rather, that it also requires a level of competence in the particular field. Reception class teachers in the current study were not overt in their claims that musical learning was missing due to their own perceptions of lacking self-efficacy. Rather that, omissions in music teaching were attributed to constraints such as the external and internal pressures on the



curriculum. These include notions of the crowded curriculum, literacy and numeracy imperatives, staffing and noise levels. The research literature supports these data, on two accounts. First, that music is becoming less visible in early childhood education (Ehrlin & Tivenius, 2018; Nardo, Custodero, Persellin, & Brink Fox, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Kulset & Halle, 2019). Second, that both external and internal constraints are also recorded in the literature (Tarnowski, 1999; Addison, 1991; Goouch, 2008; Martlew, 2011; Maynard et al., 2013). It seems that some of these concerns persist more than two decades later in some cases.

Acknowledging both the extrinsic functions, as well as the intrinsic value of music for children in this early phase of education, Kulset and Halle (2019) share their surprise “one should think that music and singing songs would be an obvious part of everyday life in all kindergartens” (n.p.). Ehrlin and Wallerstedt (2014) echo this view by voicing their disbelief “since the general perception may be that ‘music really lies at the heart’ of this education phase” (p. 1800).

#### 11.4.1 Findings overview in response to research question 3:

Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?

Further to triangulating the data with the research literature, findings can be clustered into four groups in response to the third research question exploring teacher musical identity, confidence and self-efficacy beliefs.

The first category of findings concurs with the literature, noting no change. First, most Reception teachers did not consider themselves to be musical. Second, despite the very strong personal music biographies of most of the interviewees, only half of this group of Reception teachers felt musically confident to lead singing and instrumental activities.

The final finding from triangulating the data with the literature coincides with the fourth classification category of ‘concern - further investigation required’. The finding that the positive music self-identities of almost all of the Reception teachers interviewed did not transfer to their professional practice implies that the cycle of low self-efficacy beliefs continue to be perpetuated. The implications resulting from this finding return this thesis full circle to Stunell’s (2010) correlation between teacher’s deficit in confidence, with a perceived lack of competence and agency

## 11.5 Research question 4, part I: Initial teacher education

Hennessy (2012) links the notions of lack of teacher confidence and self-efficacy with initial teacher education:

[it is a] well-documented fact that many students coming into primary teaching do not feel confident to teach music and, despite our best efforts, a good number continue to feel this throughout their careers. This is a circular problem—where to break the circle? (Hennessy, 2012, p. 3 online).

The professional standards (DfE, 2011) for qualified teacher status and requirements for initial teacher training in England (TDA, 2008) state that newly qualified teachers (NQT`s) are required “to have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s)” (DfE, 2011, p. 11). A constraint to achieving this level of competence may be the limited time scheduled for musical training during initial teacher education courses (Hallam et al., 2009; Holden & Button, 2006; Hennessy, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Beauchamp, 2010; Henley, 2017). This notion aligns with Darling Hammond`s view (2000) that there is a direct correlation between the length of teacher preparation and the quality of teaching.

Initial teacher education (ITE) is likely to be the first formal opportunity for prospective Reception teachers to acquire knowledge, experience skills and competence in teaching music. In terms of their professional qualifications, the quantitative data indicated that the majority of respondents followed an undergraduate route to qualifying with teacher status, whereas a minority undertook a Post Graduate Certificate of Education qualification (PGCE) further to their first degree. Just over half of the respondents trained specifically to teach children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. One in five completed their initial teacher education (ITE) recently, in the current decade and a further third between the years 2000 and 2009. Just under half were engaged in their initial professional training in the 1990s or earlier.

Each teacher`s journey to teaching in the Early Years was traced during the interviews, as well as the reasons for their preference for this age range. Notions of commitment, continuity and creativity formed the focus for this section of the discussion. Three interviewees, Hilary, Dawn and Beatrice, had been teaching for twenty years or more. A point of interest emerged from the finding that their teaching experience had been confined to just one or two schools. In contrast, Frances and Elizabeth have experienced teaching throughout the Primary school age range but are now firmly

ensconced in the Reception Year of the EYFS. Elizabeth`s reasons for her preference for working in the EYFS included opportunities offered by the creative curriculum as well as the child-centred pedagogy. Frances also described her enthusiasm for working with children in the Reception Year.

The journey to specialising as an EYFS teacher was explored further. Frances` case was interesting as she had travelled full circle. Trained as a Nursery Nurse prior to her degree and initial teacher training, Frances had also experienced teaching children aged five to seven years (KS1), as well as eight to eleven years (KS2) before returning to the Foundation stage. (The English national curriculum is organised into `key stages`. KS1 refers to children aged five to seven years and KS2, seven to eleven years of age).<sup>54</sup> Four participants had focused on the Early Years at the outset, either by the choice of their degree, Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course, or influenced by their first teaching placement experience. The more recently qualified teachers described their route to the EYFS. Claire completed a PGCE, specialising in Early Years. Isabelle explained that her pathway was determined by her first school placement experience in a Reception class, commenting "I just loved this age group and I think you can be much more creative" (Isabelle).

To sum, it is clear that the interviewees demonstrated a distinct passion for the particular age group that they have chosen to teach. For most of these teachers, this was illustrated by both their motivation and enthusiasm, as well as their longstanding commitment to teaching in the Early Years.

Hennessy (2006) describes the double bind in which newly qualified teachers find themselves:

Music in primary training suffers a double disadvantage in the present scenario. The emphasis on the core subjects may result in music having as little as four hours on a taught programme in which to introduce students to teaching the subject, and access to very little or no music teaching when in school. This can exacerbate the view that teaching music is difficult and best left to "experts" (Hennessy, 2006, n.p.).<sup>55</sup>

The questionnaire posed questions as to the quality and quantity of the musical input in their ITE course. Despite a bias toward education focused undergraduate studies, nearly two thirds of the Reception teachers reported that the musical component of their professional training was either absent or of poor quality. Less than one quarter

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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>

<sup>55</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.tes.com/news/dont-forget-teachers>

reported that the music input was good or excellent. Similarly, where provision was made for music in the course of the undergraduate studies, this tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience for nearly half of respondents, as opposed to being provided on a regular basis. A quarter of the respondents noted the `irregular` nature of the musical ITE input. A statistically significant finding from applying the two-sided Fisher's Exact test demonstrated that the ITE music input for the more recently trained Reception teachers (2000s, 2010s) was a `one off` experience, rather than delivered `on a regular basis` with a reported p-value of 0.08. A second finding of statistical significance evidenced that the musically accomplished singer and/or instrumentalists were more likely to have been trained in the 1970s and 1980s, with a reported p-value of 0.015 from the two-sided Fisher's Exact test. An interesting finding, when considered in the context of the investment in national initiatives such as Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (Henley, 2017).

De Vries (2011) demonstrated a positive correlation between the number of hours of music education 112 generalist primary teachers in Melbourne, Australia, experienced in the course of their ITE and the subsequent impact on their levels of confidence and competence, as well as their commitment to teach music. In this case 26% of the 112 first year teachers who experienced between 20-40 hours of music input, noted the influence on their perceptions of musical self-efficacy, and their positive outlook on teaching music. The majority of the Reception teachers from the current study (8%; n=39) recalled their total number of music education hours to be six. This finding compares unfavourably with the majority (46%) of the first-year teachers experiencing between 10 to 19 hours in the Australian study. In England, Henley (2017) reports that the current PGCE provision for the foundation subjects such as music "is just one 3-hour slot each" (Henley, 2017, p. 473).

The interviewees reflected on the musical component of their initial training courses. They discussed positive school placement experiences and raised the notion of good role models or mentors. All the teachers had engaged in their initial teacher education, be it PGCE, BEd, or BA with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)<sup>56</sup>, from 1970s through to the 2010s. Only one interviewee, Gillian, unequivocally reported the music component of their initial training to be a positive, useful experience. Furthermore, Gillian explained

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<sup>56</sup>Qualified teacher status is required in order to teach in maintained primary schools.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts>

that her musical confidence was in part due to the experience and enthusiasm of her Primary education lecturer who, by chance, was a musician. Hilary also felt her course emphasised the value of music in the Early Years. Half of the interview participants, including the two recently qualified teachers, reflected an ambivalent representation of the music component of their initial teacher education, commenting on the limited musical contribution, input imbalance between subjects, as well as the lack of depth and thorough attention (Isabelle). Dawn, a very experienced Reception teacher, attributed the approach adopted by her tutors to be one of encouragement and enthusiasm, rather than instruction. Both Frances who trained in the 1990s and Elizabeth in the 2000s presented a gloomier picture, struggling to recall the experience or describing it as “very, very limited” (Frances).

These findings are echoed in the literature on the subject of ITE. As Gifford (1993a) comments:

The results ... provide little evidence that the pre-service training courses enhanced the confidence and competence of students to teach music (Gifford, 1993a, p. 37).

Beauchamp (1997) raises concerns about the musical knowledge and understanding expected of practising teachers, suggesting that “their training did not equip them with the relevant theoretical and pedagogical background” (p. 69). Stunell (2010) also acknowledges that “Even where music training has been available, a positive experience for students has not been universal” (p.83). On the other hand, Hallam et al., (2009) report that despite inadequate levels of ITE music training, the students in their study believed it to be of a high standard.

This area of discussion has explored the participants` varied experiences of the music component of their initial teacher education. These experiences do not appear to be dependent on the era of their initial training. In other words, an improvement in the perceived quality of contribution has not been observed as time has passed. Moreover, some of the dated literature references suggest that little has changed in the last two decades. Similarly, the apparent inconsistencies in provision across ITE programmes raises questions of quality, equality of access and opportunity, as well as monitoring and standardisation.

The contribution of the fieldwork experience or school placement element is considered to be a significant component of the initial teacher education programme (Hennessy, 2000; Koutsoupidou, 2010; Kim & Kemple, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2010) employs the term `practice-in practice` with expert guidance as a model of teacher education.

Legette (2013) describes the purpose of the school placement experience as one where students “spend extensive time in the field and simultaneously apply what they learn in class to actual teaching problems” (p. 16). However, this opportunity or benefit seems to be arbitrary, rather than guaranteed, due to a variety of factors such as timetabling, resources, expert practitioners and so on (Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Stunell, 2010). Indeed, Nutbrown (2012), in an independent review of early education and childcare qualifications, raises the issue of the “long-term impact of poor-quality placements” (DfE, 2012, p. 41).

The interviews exploring the school placement experience with the participant Reception class teachers, offered mixed responses. On the one hand, an instructive and supportive experience of the music teaching practice was exemplified. As Beatrice commented: “Probably most of the sort of use of music came during teaching practice ... observing teachers”. However, this does depend on the confidence, experience and musical expertise of the teacher mentor, not a guaranteed opportunity, and likely to be arbitrary at best. Claire explained:

If then went to a school where ... perhaps you didn't get a lot of experience doing that in your placement either, you almost finish your PGCE Year feeling a bit underprepared to teach certain things (Claire).

Further to the good musical grounding that Gillian received in college, her good fortune persisted into her first school placement. For, her mentor modelled a very positive musical input, enabling Gillian to be musically confident and prepared for encouraging children's musicality in her own setting.

To sum, regardless of training era, the findings from this study indicated that the music component of the ITE experienced by both groups of questionnaire respondents and interview participants was of poor quality overall and not sufficiently comprehensive to facilitate their teaching of music in the classroom. In addition, the teaching practice experience, though having the potential to be valuable and worthwhile, was haphazard in practice. The discussion thus far has focused on the third thread of Initial Teacher Education. However, as Beauchamp (1997) remarks “it is important that practising teachers are not forgotten” (p. 69). This timely reminder provides a segue to the fourth thread in response to the fourth research question regarding teacher's in-service professional development in music pedagogical practices.

### 11.5.1 Research question 4, part 2: Continuing professional development

Beauchamp (1997) suggests that practising teachers should be able to access Continued Professional Development (CPD) in order to further develop their musical knowledge, understanding and confidence. In-service Teacher Education (INSET) is an essential factor in the continued professional development of teachers and the responsibility for this lies with the incumbent, shared with his/her employer (Holden & Button, 2006; DfE, 2011, 2012). The Teachers' Standards Guidance (DfE, 2011) supports this assumption, stating:

Appropriate self-evaluation, reflection and professional development activity is critical to improving teachers' practice at all career stages (DfE, 2011, p. 7).

However, there has been much change in the intervening period, not least to the coherent and coordinated provision of CPD, particularly since the demise of the role of Local (Education) Authorities, (LA`s). Over the last three decades, further to the 1988 Education Bill, there has been a gradual erosion of the remit of the LA`s by successive Conservative and Labour governments.<sup>57</sup> One impact has been the decline in the positions of LA Music Advisers whose role included "constantly raising aspirations and sharing best practice".<sup>58</sup>

The topics of musical training opportunities for practising Reception teachers, as well as their perceived needs for further development were incorporated into the questionnaire, in order to respond to this section of the fourth research question regarding teacher`s in-service music professional development. Just over half of the questionnaire respondents had undertaken further professional development training that incorporated music. These in-service training opportunities were most likely to be provided `in house` (in school), or out of school, organised by the local authority or perhaps more recently the Music Education Hub (MEH).

The themes emerging from the interviews on the subject of CPD ranged from: (1) the complete absence of music In-Service Education Training (INSET) since initial teacher training; (2) whole school music training with associated opportunities; to (3) the constraints Reception teachers encounter. Opportunities for music CPD for three of the interviewees appeared to be either non-existent, or at the very least historic and/or

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<sup>57</sup> Retrieved from: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1987/dec/01/education-reform-bill-1>.

<sup>58</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/jun/22/schools-local-education-authorities>

sporadic e.g., “No, none at all” (Frances). Two participants commented on their good fortune to have a music specialist on the school teaching staff, knowledgeable and experienced in early years practice, providing support. Kreuger (1999) favours collaborative, co-teaching experiences, which offer support, feedback and interaction:

Research also shows that collaboration with peers and experienced teachers nurtures intellectual and reflective abilities in new teachers (Krueger, 1999, p. 7).

Isabelle, a recently qualified teacher and music co-ordinator in her school, talked about the benefits of increased confidence and more positive attitudes towards the teaching of music as a result of recent whole school CPD. However, Isabelle also identified a major dilemma, that despite the benefits of the recent whole staff music in-service training, teachers were unable to apply their new knowledge nor try out the new ideas due to constraints in the timetable.

Pursuing the thread of the positive influence of significant role models contributing to professional music development, half of the interview participants shared very positive reflections on the input offered by mentors that they had encountered. The teachers reported that these mentors had exerted considerable influence on their teaching of music. They included a visiting music teacher (Gillian), an in-house specialist music teacher (Hilary), NQT mentor who coincidentally was a musician (Elizabeth) and a music co-ordinator (Claire). Hilary also attributed her musical knowledge and confidence to the inspirational support and encouragement of in-house music specialist, who has since retired and left the school. These teachers considered themselves to be fortunate, further to their mentor experience, and they were appreciative of this valuable source of professional development, but it appeared to be neither ongoing, sustainable, nor accessible to all. Indeed, interestingly most of these mentor experiences were not formally recognised, nor planned.

With regard to the constraints preventing access to music CPD, Frances and Hilary referenced limited funding and the low priority the subject area was given in school development plans, in comparison to literacy, numeracy and science, as key reasons for the lack of music INSET. The literature supports this finding, for as de Vries (2011) reported:

...music, but realistically, that's not a priority in my school. It's all about literacy, numeracy, classroom management issues (de Vries, 2011, p. 19).

Elizabeth offered an alternative rationale to explain the unlikelihood of teachers receiving the opportunity to experience music CPD:



(In my) current school, a lot of music is provided by outside agencies and so maybe they wouldn't see a need for the teachers to be trained (Elizabeth).

This view is succinctly summed, referencing the long-term ramifications as well, by Hallam et al., (2009):

Employing visiting specialists sends a message to schools that they do not need to train their teachers to teach music, and de-skills generalist teachers" (Hallam et al., 2009, p. 237).

Nutbrown, in the EYFS DfE Review 'Foundations for quality' (2012), also noted the constraining factors of financial pressures in the current economic climate, as well as reporting issues of access to and the quality of CPD provision. Furthermore, Nutbrown (2012) made an interesting proposal, an Ofsted initiative, which if it were to be implemented would work towards raising the status of music with regard to CPD. In essence, Ofsted could formally search for evidence of staff CPD as part of their inspection framework.

Settings will be asked to provide evidence of how they are supporting staff development and needs, and a description of their programme of CPD and training (DfE, 2012, p. 52).

On the subject of continued professional music development for practising teachers, the findings from this research study appear to indicate that music was not highlighted as an area of need in school development plans. Some of the findings recorded here are also evidenced by the Ofsted (2009) 'Making more of music: an evaluation of music in schools' which noted that "Helpful continuing professional development and challenge were rare" (p. 5).

Two questions, one offering a fixed dichotomous choice response (yes/no) and the second, inviting a more open-ended response were posed to the questionnaire respondents to indicate their perceived need for music INSET. Almost all of the respondents reported that they would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development. The open-ended responses focusing on identifying a particular area of interest, were collated and thematically grouped into the following areas: ideas; planning, differentiation and progression; resources and techniques; cross-curricular; assessment and staff related. There was some overlap with the areas of technology, methodology and assessment that Kastner (2014) also reported as teacher music training needs. Some Reception teachers referenced some of the issues under discussion in this current study and these could be challenged, as to perhaps reflecting a positive response bias. It is evident that the questionnaire had provoked

reflection on these topics, nevertheless, the respondents clearly considered these aspects of their practice warranted further support and development. The highlighted areas included planning and progression in music:

To plan for music and make links into topics and to plan the next steps for children in an effective manner (Anon.).

Understanding the progression of pupil's understanding and the activities to offer in sequence to facilitate best practice" (Anon.).

Noteworthy and relevant to the current discourse is Schmidt's (2010) finding that all six of her research participants "referenced skills for lesson sequencing and planning as the most important thing they learned from peer teaching experiences" (p. 135).

The interview participants added some interesting perspectives on the issue of CPD. Progression in musical learning and development was also raised by Claire, whilst Elizabeth suggested that someone who understood the constraints of working in the early years would be helpful:

... someone ... specific to Early Years... Someone who gets Early Years and can show me how to do it with a little bit of time and a little bit of resources would be the most useful I think (Elizabeth).

Hilary takes this notion further, proposing that observing an expert practitioner working in situ with the children would be more constructive than an off-site training course. In short, these Reception teachers were suggesting that traditional CPD models were not particularly effective and recommending alternative ideas which they perceived would be more useful and appropriate.

In light of these findings, a search of the literature was undertaken in pursuit of contemporary CPD initiatives. Innovative approaches include: (1) an intensive programme that focused on "a creative and learner-centred approach the impact of a practical music making `Blues` activity, conducted "in an asynchronous e-learning environment (Seddon & Biasutti, 2008); (2) accessing the potential of the internet as a medium for professional development (Moore, 2009; DfE, 2012; Bell-Robertson, 2015). Indeed, membership of online communities such as blogs, forums, social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter and Wikispaces can be helpful for peer support and information; (3) `Communities of practice`, also known as `Collaborative groups`; `Professional development community of teachers`; `Professional, Inquiry or Teacher learning communities` offer a third approach in support of CPD (Cochran & Lytle, 1999; McCotter, 2001; Feiman-Nemser 2001a; Sundli, 2007; Gruenhagen, 2012; Kastner,

2014; Kenny, 2014; Bell-Robertson, 2015; Pitt, 2018; Pitt & Arculus, 2018). McCotter describes this notion:

Collaboration in professional development, then, means meaningful, intellectual involvement with a community of colleagues (McCotter, 2001, p. 698).

To conclude this area of discussion, Nutbrown (DfE, 2012) offers her recommendation on the subject of professional development:

The best professional development uses a blended approach including high quality materials, work-based learning and support, visits to other settings, experiences which challenge thinking, attending conferences, and provision of mentoring from outstanding leaders and peers (DfE, 2012, p. 54).

#### 11.5.2 Findings overview in response to research question 4:

What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

The first category of findings concur with the literature, noting no change, e.g., (1) most teachers followed an undergraduate route (QTS) to the EYFS, rather than completing a PGCE; (2) half of respondents the trained specifically to teach EYFS, long term motivation and commitment demonstrated by interviewees; (3) one interviewee and a small number of respondents reported good or excellent ITE music input; (4) undergraduate music input tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience; (5) positive and instructive school placement experiences were noted by a small proportion of interviewees; (6) half of respondents had undertaken further professional development courses in music, most likely to be provided `in house` (in school), or out of school, by the local authority; (7) music CPD opportunities constrained by notions of limited funding and the low priority given to music in school development plans; (8) almost all teachers would welcome the opportunity for music CPD, areas of need included planning and progression in music.

A finding meeting the second classification of `concur - with a contemporary twist`, references a consequence of bringing outside agencies into school to deliver music during the scheduled PPA. Namely, teachers were less likely to be offered music CPD opportunities. The final finding from triangulating the data with the literature coincides with the fourth classification category of `concern - further investigation required`. The finding that the positive music self-identities of almost all of the Reception teachers

interviewed did not transfer to their professional practice implies that the cycle of low self-efficacy beliefs continue to be perpetuated. The implications resulting from this finding return this thesis full circle to Stunell`s (2010) correlation between teacher`s deficit in confidence, with a perceived lack of competence and agency.

## 11.6 Summary

In the course of this discussion chapter, arguments relating to the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class; musical learning and development; teacher musical identity, confidence and self-efficacy; as well as initial teacher and education and continuing professional development have been reviewed and critiqued. In anticipation of the next and final chapter, intending to summarise the research findings, with implications for research and practice, it is timely to draw the reader`s attention to two particularities emerging from the data. Namely, the impact of the dual curricula on teacher`s well-being; and second, the profile of the `musically accomplished` Reception teacher with regard to musical learning and development in the Reception class.

A pedagogical dichotomy has been observed in the Reception classroom. Teachers endeavour to navigate a path between the `pushdown`, formal didactic teaching methods and product orientated goals associated with the National Curriculum (Wood, 2013; Martlew et al., 2011), and a child-centred philosophy with its emphases on play, ownership, agency and a holistic learning journey (Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2011; Wood, 2013). Working to meet these contrary demands can only provide a source of tension, frustration and conflict for the Reception teachers (Bresler, 1993; Ofsted, 2012). Moreover, the additional concerns related to target tracking, baseline testing, notions of value added, phonics screening and so on, add a further layer to the mix (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017). The findings from this study suggest that some teachers may have found the challenges of `fitting it all in` difficult to accomplish. Indeed, despite the best of intentions, opportunities for musical learning in accordance with the recommendation for children's entitlement (OCHR, 1989) may have fallen by the wayside. It may be that this issue will be addressed by the new Ofsted framework (2019) that is promoting a broad and balanced curriculum beyond the statutory description of a National Curriculum in England. Although laudable in itself, this initiative could be perceived by some teachers to be yet another layer of demands

astride an already overloaded curriculum, particularly as the datafication priorities such as literacy and numeracy will continue to prevail. It is too early to report on the impact of this latest new strategy vis-à-vis health and well-being outcomes for both children and teachers. However, it is hoped that these will be monitored officially.

It may not be surprising to learn that the participant EYFS trained Reception teachers were more likely than their non EYFS trained counterparts to integrate musical activities into their daily routine, including at 'carpet time', or to use song to scaffold curricular learning. A comparison of the 'musician/non musician' participant variables presented some intriguing findings, worthy of further deliberation. The cross-tabulation process suggested that those Reception teachers who were musically accomplished: (1) were less likely to incorporate musical activities in the daily routine; (2) did not employ musical activities to scaffold learning across the prime and specific areas; and (3) were less likely to provide a 'sound' area in their classroom, nor soundmakers for children to engage in musical play every day. It could be surmised that the musically accomplished Reception teachers are the products of a teaching and learning legacy, referenced as the 'master-apprentice' model (AEC, 2010), with a teacher-directed pedagogy aligning more with the didactic zone of the teaching continua (AEC, 2010). This phenomenon could also be perceived as a self-perpetuating cycle of peripatetic tutors producing each generation of music educators. This possibility may go some way to explaining some of the idiosyncratic findings from this research study.

Further evidence to support this claim includes the statistically significant finding that the musically accomplished Respondents were more likely to follow a structured music curriculum framework (2-sided Fisher's Exact test;  $p = 0.14$ ). However, a second finding of statistical significance records that the 'musicians' were less confident in the respect of planning for musical progression (Mann-Whitney U Test:  $U=250.5$ ;  $p= 0.006$ ;  $n=12:27$ ). Indeed, this group also indicated that they were more likely to record children's musical achievements, using an in-house scheme for this purpose. This finding could be noted to align with the emphasis on performance-based outcomes normally associated with the traditional peripatetic trajectory towards musicianship (AEC, 2010). Moreover, it could be argued that this finding adds an alternative lens to the 'specialist/generalist' debate (Mills, 1989; Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000). Namely: (1) the cultural capital associated with this accepted pathway to musicianship colours current pedagogical practice (i.e., inherited past practices influence and impact the present); and (2) these data refine the framing of the discussion beyond the bi-fold

generalist/specialist teacher to include those Reception teachers with a musical background, thus suggesting that a greater level of complexity surrounds this debate than perhaps previously perceived. However, further research, discussion and critical reflection are required with regard to both this notion, as well as that of the strengths and challenges of the contrasting pedagogies that are trying to coexist in the EYFS.

## Chapter 12: Conclusion

### 12.1 Introduction

The present study sought to explore the nature of teacher confidence with regard to facilitating the musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at primary school. Grounded in the premise that all children have an entitlement to a broad and rich music education, the aim was to try to reconcile a possible challenge in nurturing children's musical competence and agency in cases where there is a potential lack of confidence, knowledge and understanding on the part of the teacher.

A series of literature reviews explored the innate musicality of young children, as well as the themes of teacher musical identity, confidence and beliefs in musical self-efficacy. Situated in an international context, early childhood pedagogical practices in England were compared and contrasted with those abroad, as well as with the more formal didactic pedagogy associated with the compulsory phase of schooling. Finally, traditional forms of teacher support including initial teacher education and continuing professional development were also explored, as well as contemporary initiatives. The aim was to discover innovative, evidence-based strategies that might encourage Reception teachers, help them to gain confidence, to believe in their musical self-efficacy, which in turn could translate into musical agency in the classroom.

A theoretical framework, grounded in the iterative and dialogical processes of hermeneutic philosophy, evolved to serve a number of purposes. First, to facilitate critical engagement with the extant bodies of literature in accordance with the principles of interpretative understanding. Second, to provide a conceptual lens, an analytical tool to help define the research problem (outlined above), as well as generate the research questions (restated below). Third, the rigour of the hermeneutic cyclical process of 'critical review, evaluate and reflect', served to add an objective perspective and frame, thus contributing to the concepts of reliability and validity.

A dual focus from the perspectives of both the child and teacher, the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the study involved: (1) learning what musical opportunities children aged four and five years might encounter in the Reception classroom; and (2) gaining a better understanding of the strengths, constraints, issues, concerns and

challenges facing the Reception class teacher. These were reflected in the following four research questions:

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

## 12.2 Responding to the research questions

Findings were summarised and clustered into four categories in response to each research question. The first group concur with the literature, noting no change. The second category of findings were described to 'concur', with a 'contemporary twist'. The third group were believed to be in 'conflict' or 'contradict' previous research evidence, and the last group gave rise to a 'cause for concern', recommending the need for further investigation. A summary overview of the main findings in response to the four research questions is presented here.

The first research question focused on the nature of the musical experiences and opportunities children might encounter in the Reception classroom. These might be transitory, perhaps interwoven into the routine of the school day, so contributing to a class musical ethos. Learning through music provided the second area for discussion, whilst the notions of musical environments involving the provision of resources, and/or provocations, to stimulate musical play created the third piece of the puzzle. Teacher observations of spontaneous musical play represented the final area of consideration, in response to the first research question exploring the nature of musical learning in the Reception classroom.

Key findings responding to the four areas of exploration of the first research question concurred with the literature, in other words noting *no change*. These comprised: (1) music was incorporated into daily routines, but not universally; (2) music was overwhelmingly employed to enrich, enhance and scaffold other curricular learning; (3) concerns prevail such as acceptable noise level, particularly for children with aural sensitivities, as well as risk of instrumental damage; (4) children's musical experience



mostly took the form of child-initiated learning; (5) children were observed to sing, initiate other kinds of musical activity, sing and dance, recreate tunes they knew and/or create their own tunes on the instruments, during `free play` time; and (6) no significant gender differences were observed between girls and boys in their child-initiated play. Further findings responding to the first research question also demonstrate that although little appears to have changed, when cross-referenced with the literature, *contemporary* factors have made an impact. For example, Reception teachers reported that external constraints such as performance and accountability measures have led to a reduction in musical learning opportunities for the children. Another contemporary phenomenon suggested that a visiting music teacher, contracted for `PPA time` might be responsible for planning the music curriculum for the Reception class, although this was rare. On the whole any music input remained within the remit of the class teacher.

Findings of *concern*, arising from the data responses to the first research question included: (1) Reception children not receiving their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum including music; (2) limited opportunities available for facilitating musical learning and development; as well as (3) concerns for an equal balance of child and adult-initiated activities; and (4) the musical provision by external providers (and internal in some cases), lacked monitoring for quality, coherence and coverage.

Findings *requiring further investigation* comprised, first that the personal, social and emotional benefits of music making could be more widely understood. Second, that the therapeutic and transformative powers of music to support children with SEND, including those with behavioural needs, within the mainstream classroom need to be recognised, acknowledged and developed.

The second research question sought to learn how Reception class teachers plan for musical learning and development, as well as their perceived levels of confidence with regard to a range of pedagogical activities. The questionnaire explored themes such as staffing, curricular frameworks, differentiation and progression or `next steps`, as well as formative and summative approaches to assessment, including observational recording of children`s musical achievements.

Key findings reporting *no change* from those recorded in the literature included: (1) musical activities were mostly planned within topics; (2) `musical` Reception teachers were statistically more likely to follow a structured music curriculum framework; (3) Reception teachers were generally confident about planning musical opportunities,

however, planning for musical learning presented a more inconsistent picture among the interview participants; (4) Reception teachers reported moderate (or less) confidence in planning for sequential musical learning and/or differentiating musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children.

The impact of *contemporary* developments in early childhood education reported in these research findings include, firstly, that almost all the Reception teachers used video and/or photographs, as well as written comments to describe and record their observations of children's musical achievements. The second finding of interest in this respect, noted that one in four respondents also used formal grading to track the children's musical achievements. A *contradictory* finding in response to the second research question, recorded that formative assessment procedures were not commonly used to develop children's musical learning.

Two findings implying a *cause for concern* were observed on the subject of facilitating musical learning and development, warranting closer scrutiny. First, a lack of confidence, understanding and knowledge on the part of the teacher was evident both with regard to differentiating musical activities, as well as how to support children with their 'next steps' in their musical learning journeys. Second, the utility and purpose of the 'ages and stages' descriptors and ELGs for music were perceived by most interviewees to be vague and limited, providing insufficient guidance to support the 'next steps' in musical learning.

The third research question focused on Reception teachers' perceptions of confidence to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum. Findings of *no change* were recorded. Most Reception teachers did not consider themselves to be musical, despite the very strong personal music biographies of almost all of those Reception teachers interviewed. Second, only half of the interview participants claimed to feel musically confident to lead singing and instrumental activities in the Reception classroom. The finding of *concern, perhaps in need of further investigation*, noted that the positive music self-identities of almost all of the Reception teachers interviewed did not transfer to their professional practice. The implication being that the cycle of perceived inadequacy persists, represented by the lack of musical confidence on the part of the teacher, perpetuating low self-efficacy beliefs. This finding returns this thesis full circle to Stunell's (2010) suggestion of a correlation between a teacher's deficit in confidence concerning music education, with a perceived lack of competence and agency in the classroom.

The final research question focused on initial teacher education, as well as the benefits, concerns and challenges presented by continuing professional development opportunities. Most teachers followed an undergraduate route (QTS) to the EYFS, rather than completing a PGCE. Half of the questionnaire respondents recorded their enrolment on EYFS specific teacher education programmes. Furthermore, the interviewees demonstrated their long-term commitment, enthusiasm and motivation for this early phase of education. Reported findings on the subject of initial teacher education, *concurred* with the findings from the literature synthesis, recording little change. First, less than one quarter of teachers reported that the ITE music input had been good or excellent. Indeed, two recently qualified teachers described an imbalance in the quality and length of music input in their PGCE training programme, as compared with the other learning areas. Second, undergraduate music input tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` session. Third, positive and instructive school placement experiences, in the respect of the musical contribution, were only noted by a small proportion of the interviewees.

Opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) also presented a worrying picture of no change, in that only half of respondents had undertaken further professional development courses in music. These were most likely to be provided `in house` (in school), or out of school, by the local authority. The Reception teachers reported few opportunities to engage in music training due to constraints such as limited funding and the low priority given to music in school development plans. Almost all the teachers indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to take advantage of music CPD. Perceived areas of need mostly included music planning and progression. A more *contemporary finding of no change* was reported to be a consequence of bringing outside agencies into school. This included the whole class ensemble teaching programme (WCET), scheduled during PPA time for KS2 pupils. Concurring with the research literature reporting on the subject of deskilling generalist teachers, the implications of outsourcing the music provision resulted in less music CPD opportunities being offered to class teachers. The bi-fold reasons for this consequence were bound by school leaders` perceptions that funding allocated for music was channelled into external providers. Therefore, there would be no need to provide further in-service music training for teachers. The final finding from triangulating the data with the literature on the subject of CPD coincides with the fourth classification category of `concern - further investigation required`. As referenced above, this relates

to the finding that the positive music self-identities of almost all of the Reception teachers interviewed did not transfer to their professional practice, which implies that the cycle of low self-efficacy beliefs continues to be perpetuated.

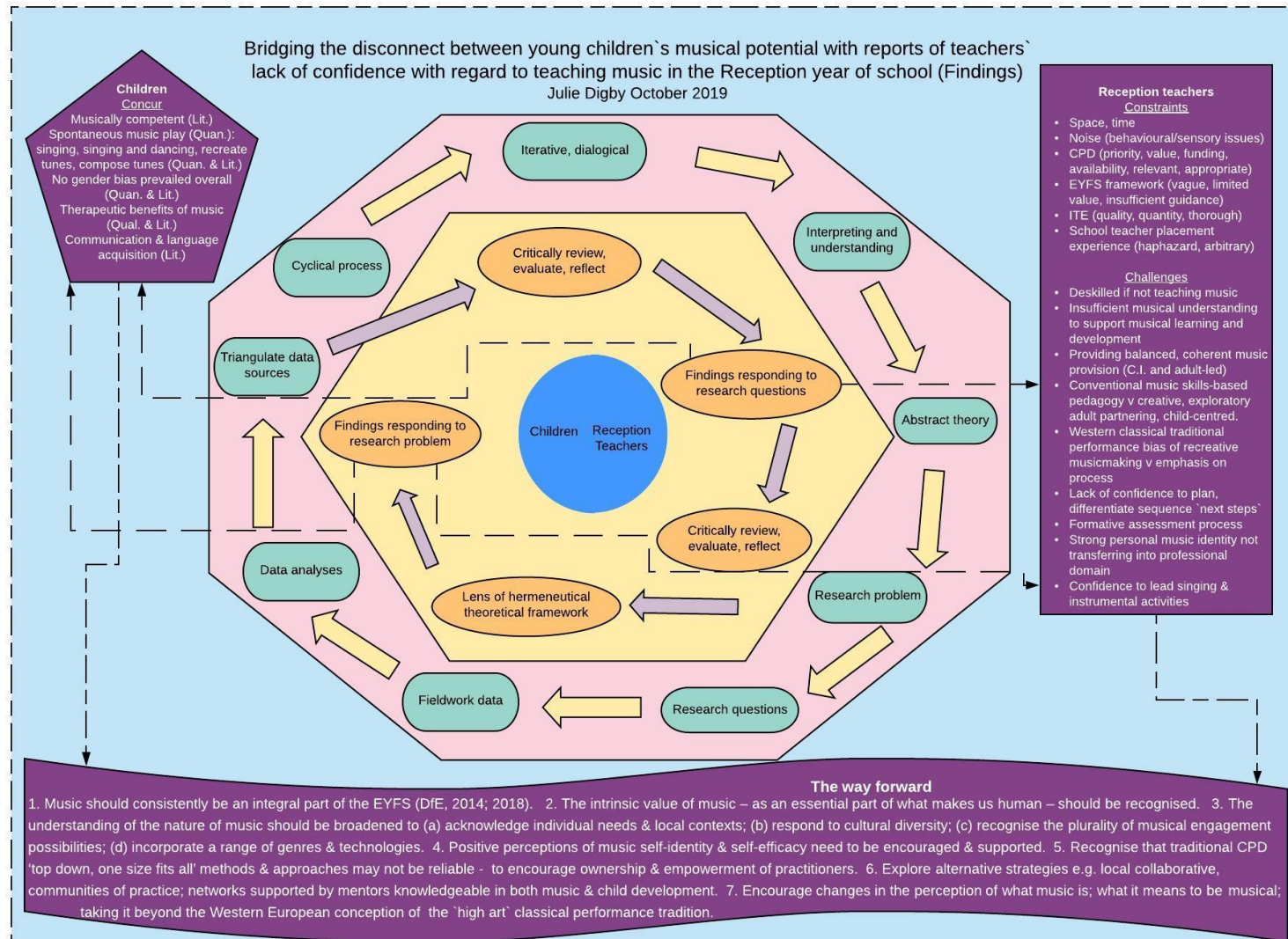
This summary of findings concludes the responses to the research questions providing a segue toward the penultimate step in this final chapter. Namely, to review, critically evaluate and reflect on the study findings in the context of the hermeneutical theoretical framework, in order to help to find a course of action to address the research problem. That is, to try to reconcile the possible disconnect between children`s musical competence and agency, with the potential lack of confidence, knowledge and understanding on the part of the teacher. A clearer understanding of the issues would help to identify the most appropriate means of supporting the teachers, with a view to a sustained amelioration of the musical engagement experience of both parties.

### 12.3 Responding to the research problem

In pursuit of a deeper understanding of the principal issues of the research problem described above, an iterative and dialogical process was initiated. This involved understanding the constituent parts, within the breadth and diversity of the socio-historical and cultural context, as reported in the relevant bodies of literature. A circle of understanding emerged and evolved in response to the cyclical process of critical review, evaluation and reflection, taking into account the potential for preconceptions and personal biases, in order to lead to an informed interpretation of both the problem as well as a search for possible solutions.

Figure 12.1 provides a visual representation of the hermeneutic theoretical protocol adopted to generate the findings to address the research problem highlighted above. The outer (octagonal-shaped) circle coincides with the middle circle of the original theoretical framework (Figure 7.4), offering a recapitulation of the ongoing cyclical process engaged in the literature reviews to define the research problem. Indeed, these dialectical, iterative aspects of the hermeneutical theoretical processes of understanding and interpretation are pursued and lead to the inner (hexagon-shaped) circle of Figure 12.1. This middle circle describes the abductive reasoning process, involving constant evaluative and critical review, as well as analysing and cross-referencing the data with the literature, in order to present the findings in response to

the four research questions, reported above. As previously mentioned, the findings were clustered in groups, classified under one of four headings: (1) Concur – no change; (2) Concur – with a contemporary `twist`; (3) Contradict; and (4) Concern - further investigation required. The full list of findings emerging from this research study, reported in Chapter 11, can be found in Appendix 11.



**Figure 12.1:** The hermeneutical theoretical framework (part 2) outlining the process from identifying the research problem to reporting findings. (Adapted from Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014, Source personal collection)

The iterative, dialectical process continued with further evaluative critical review, analysing and cross-referencing the data analyses with the literature, in order to locate the relevant findings to address the research problem. The pentagon on the left-hand side of the diagram highlights the contributory factors, as well as sources, providing evidence for children's musical competency and agency. The following quantitative findings concur with the literature that children choose to engage in spontaneous musical play: (1) at least some or half of the children were observed singing and/or initiating other kinds of musical play (e.g., with instruments) some or most days; (2) almost all teachers observed children singing and dancing during 'free play' time; (3) a large proportion of the Reception teachers noted that children tried to recreate tunes that they knew and/or create their own tunes on the instruments. Furthermore, the quantitative findings from this study support the research evidence recorded twenty years earlier that "spontaneous musical activity during free play ... showed no significant differences between girls and boys" (Sundin, 1997, p. 54). Qualitative findings raised additional themes highlighting the transformative and therapeutic power of music for those children with behavioural needs, as well as for those experiencing difficulties with communication and language acquisition.

The rectangle on the righthand side of the diagram (Figure 12.1) outlines the constraints and challenges encountered by the Reception teacher. These may impact on teachers' levels of confidence and feelings of self-efficacy with regard to developing children's musical learning in the classroom. The challenges can be categorised into five main areas: (1) internal or context-based, practical and logistical; (2) external constraints; (3) support and guidance; (4) initial teacher education (ITE) and (5) continuing professional development (CPD). The first area of internal or context-based constraints comprises the well recorded challenges of physical space, as well as acceptable levels of noise. With the added concern that music played at a high volume could become a sensory issue for those children in the class, impaired with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Pressure to meet externally imposed attainment targets, as well as issues of teaching 'effectiveness', national standards and school performance 'accountability' measures were reported to impact on the teacher's perceived ability to provide sufficient musical learning opportunities for the children. The third area of challenge referenced the view that the 'ages and stages' descriptors, as well as the early learning goals incorporating music outlined in the EYFS statutory framework were vague and limited in application. This contributed to the teachers sharing their lack of

confidence, understanding and knowledge with regard to differentiation, as well as the `next steps` in music. The use of formative assessment procedures as a means to facilitate children`s musical learning and development were also identified as an area of challenge. Findings concerning the quality and quantity of the music input of the initial teacher education (ITE) experience concurred with the findings from the literature synthesis. Less than one quarter of teachers reported that the ITE music input had been good or excellent. Furthermore, there was evidence supporting the finding that little has changed in this respect, as two recently qualified teachers described a similar imbalance in the quality and length of music input in their PGCE training programme. Equally, the school placement remains an arbitrary experience, as only two of the eight participants described this component of their ITE to be positive and instructive.

Continuing professional development (CPD) represents the fifth area of challenge for the Reception teacher. Only half of the questionnaire respondents had undertaken further professional development courses in music. Reasons for this finding included limited funding and the low priority the subject area was given in school development plans, in comparison to literacy, numeracy and science. Ninety per cent of participants would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development. Perceived areas of CPD need included planning and progression in music.

An alternative series of factors emerged during the course of this research study which also impact on teacher confidence and beliefs of self-efficacy in the respect of facilitating musical learning and development. These begin with teachers` perceptions of music, musicality and musicianship. These were most often connected to conventional music skills-based pedagogies and performance biases of adult recreative music making associated with the Western classical canon. In contrast, early childhood practices focus on notions of learning through explorative play, child agency and the creative process. Strong personal music identities did not transfer into professional practice for almost all of the interviewees, suggesting that there is a need to harness these musical interests and enthusiasms. Balancing these with a greater musical understanding and awareness of both the musical qualities in play and how to encourage their development could potentially impact positively on teacher confidence, to support musical learning and development in the Reception classroom.

Finally, the `banner` underneath the framework, purposed to offer ameliorative strategies to bridge the disconnect between children and teachers (in the centre),



corresponds to the notion of `looking backwards to move forwards`. This aligns with one of the tenets of hermeneutic philosophy that proposes, that understanding involves preunderstanding the constituent parts, as well as the whole, within the breadth and diversity of the socio-historical and cultural context. A more succinct description representing this process might be: “analyzing the past to prepare for the future” (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. viii).

In sum, the findings from this study point to the way forward, offering the following recommendations:

- Music should consistently be an integral part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014; 2018).
- An understanding of the nature of music and music education should be broadened to:
  - (a) acknowledge individual needs and local contexts
  - (b) respond to cultural diversity, as well as cultural capital
  - (c) recognise the plurality of musical engagement possibilities; and
  - (d) incorporate a range of genres and technologies.
- There is a need to upskill teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the musical qualities within children’s musical play, as well as how to develop them.
- There is also a need to encourage and support teachers’ positive perceptions of music self-identity and self-efficacy, by developing appropriate strategies that enable these to be translated into pedagogy.
- Providers (in-and-out-of-school) should recognise that traditional CPD ‘top down, one size fits all’ methods and approaches may not be reliable; that there is a need to encourage ownership and empowerment of practitioners.
- Alternative strategies should be explored in terms of professional development, such as the fostering of local collaborative communities of practice, networks supported by mentors knowledgeable in both music and child development.
- There is also a need to encourage changes in the perception of what music is, as well as what it means to be musical, taking it beyond the elitist connotations of a Western European conception of the `high art` classical performance tradition.

## 12.4 Study implications

This research study sought to explore the nature of teacher`s confidence with regard to facilitating musical learning and development of children in the Reception Year at school. The ‘Hundred Review’ (Pascal et al., 2017) noted a paucity of published research evidence of current Reception Year pedagogy and practice. Similarly, studies exploring music learning and development in this last year of the Foundation Stage (EYFS2) remain scarce. Therefore, the rationale for this research was to contribute to these bodies of knowledge in order to recognise, recommend and respond to the imperative that all young children should have equal access of opportunity and experience to develop their innate musicality.

To this end, the themes of teacher musical identity, confidence and beliefs of self-efficacy, as well as current early childhood pedagogical practices were explored. The contribution to knowledge of the research findings suggests that: (a) many Reception class teachers are not sufficiently confident to engage in musical activities with their pupils, because of a general poor sense of self-efficacy with regard to music pedagogy; and (b) the statutory curricula and guidelines create difficulties in making explicit what music education should be for young children and children entering Primary school. This is compounded by the Reception Year (the first year of Primary School) having its curricula shaped by both the Early Learning Goals and also the National Curriculum.

Potential impacts emerging from the findings of this study are pertinent across the strata of interested and involved stakeholders, ranging from national policy to schools and `in the home`.

### 12.4.1 Implications for national policy, Music Education Hubs and Initial teacher education providers

1. Provision for all young children (zero to five) to be able to access and engage in music making experiences should be incorporated formally and officially into the National Plan for Music Education 2020-2030. This both creates a public statement of value, whilst acknowledging the musical competence and agency of the very young infant.
2. Music should consistently be an integral part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014; 2018) and not be a casualty of curricula constraints resulting from the pressures of performance and accountability, nor hidden under a vague umbrella

term such as creativity or the arts. Whilst acknowledging the functional and therapeutic purposes and benefits of music, the intrinsic value of music – as an essential part of what makes us human – should be recognised and included for its inherent worth.

3. Music Education Hubs should devise a coherent and coordinated early childhood (zero to five) music strategy. More importantly: (a) this should be informed by best practice research; (b) music practitioners need to be skilled and have the required knowledge and understanding of both child development and early childhood music pedagogical practices; and (c) the understanding the nature of music should be broadened to acknowledge individual needs and local contexts, respond to cultural diversity, as well as recognise the plurality of musical engagement possibilities, incorporating a range of genres and technologies.
4. A more coordinated, coherent and effective approach is required to workforce development for all those involved in the education and care of zero to five-year-olds, including such groups as childminders, preschools, nurseries and Reception teachers. Recognising that traditional continuing professional development 'top down, one size fits all' methods and approaches may not be reliable, it is also necessary to turn to examples of good practice evidenced in the research to encourage ownership and empowerment of practitioners at ground level. Alternative strategies should be explored, such as collaborative communities of practice and/or networks, supported by mentors knowledgeable in both music and child development.
5. Positive perceptions of music self-identity and self-efficacy need to be encouraged and supported throughout a teacher's continuous professional development, beginning with initial teacher education. Strategies to accomplish this goal involve: (a) creating environments with an embedded musical ethos, where it becomes the accepted norm to sing and engage in a variety of embodied musical practices; and (b) encouraging changes in the perception of what music is, as well as what it means to be musical, taking it beyond the elitist connotations of a Western European conception of the 'high art' classical performance tradition.
6. Finally, there is a need to recognise, acknowledge and consider a means of synthesising the theoretical approaches from the disparate philosophical disciplines engaged in the research of early childhood music. The aim would be to create more coordinated, coherent and perhaps integrated understandings, with a view to their communication to the wider population, as well as research

communities. This is based on the notion that their comprehensive, substantive sum has a potential for greater informed influence than their individual parts.

#### 12.4.2 Implications for further research

Despite best efforts to counter potential challenges resulting from such concerns as low response and social desirability response biases, the small number of questionnaire respondents (n=39) remains a limitation of this research study. Recognising the limited number of responses, located in one region of England, could call into question the representativeness of the findings (Cohen et al., 2011; van Hoeven et al., 2015). Furthermore, the relatively small number of self-selecting participants may limit the potential for further generalisation. It is hoped that by employing strategies such as triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data with the literature, applying non-parametric statistical analyses tests, as well as adopting a theoretical framework, have gone some way to mitigating these potential limitations. Nonetheless, the relatively small number of participants of the study remains a limiting factor. Therefore, replicating the research by reaching a larger population, perhaps through the direct access of social media (bypassing two layers of potential gatekeepers), could be considered worthwhile.

At the same time, future researchers may wish to broaden the scope of the field of their research to include emerging topics and areas of interest that time and resources have not allowed for here. These might reference the impact of contemporary pedagogical initiatives and practices such as: (1) 'In the moment planning' (Ephgrave, 2018); (2) adult/children learning partnerships: 'Interacting, or Interfering?' (Fisher, 2016); (3) the expected changes for music within the forthcoming revised EYFS framework (2020/2021); and (4) the impact of the new Ofsted framework (2019), which holds promise for a 'deep dive' exploration of the 'intent', 'implementation' and 'impact' of the foundation subjects such as music. Similarly, the theme of the therapeutic uses and transformative impacts of music which evolved during the interviews certainly warrants further study, as this area of interest lay outside the purview of the current research brief.

## 12.5 Summary

A number of key findings have accrued from this research study. The central messages are as follows:

- Opportunities for musical learning and development in the Reception Year are becoming increasingly scarce as teachers endeavour to navigate a path between the pedagogical dichotomies presented by the polarised curricula of the EYFS and the National Curriculum, in addition to the constraints and challenges resulting from the accountability and school effectiveness agenda.
- The majority of findings suggest 'no change' from those reported elsewhere, thus concurring with the challenges and concerns reported in the literature. The implication being that neither policy, nor statutory guidance, nor teacher initial and ongoing professional development have made a sustained positive impact on music teaching and learning in the Reception Year. Consequently, poor levels of musical content pedagogical knowledge prevail (*cf* Shulman, 1986).
- Positive personal musical identities do not necessarily translate into positive professional practice, resulting in beliefs of a deficit in competence, confidence and agency in the classroom.

The overarching implications from these findings to meet the mandate of an arts (music) entitlement for every child (OCHR, 1989) comprise:

- Music should consistently be an integral and explicit component in the EYFS and not be a casualty of any curricula constraints that result from the pressures of performance and accountability.
- Whilst acknowledging the functional and therapeutic purposes and benefits of music, the intrinsic value of music – as an essential part of what makes us human (Pound & Harrison, 2003; Morin, 2004) – should be recognised and included for its inherent worth.
- A more coordinated, coherent and effective approach, encouraging ownership and empowerment of practitioners at ground level, is required to improve workforce development for all those involved in the education and care of zero to five-year-olds.
- Positive perceptions of music self-identity and self-efficacy need to be encouraged and supported. This entails encouraging changes in the perception

of what music is, as well as what it means to be musical, taking it beyond the elitist connotations of a Western European conception of a `high art` classical performance tradition (*cf* Young, 1995; Barrett, 2006).

## 12.6 Coda: Personal reflection

The final note takes the study full circle to the statement of intent made at the outset of this research. Namely, the quest to further my understanding of both the musical experiences of children in the Reception class, as well as to explore the pertinent issues for the Reception teacher with regard to this area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. My learning journey commenced by celebrating the musicality of very young children, balanced with the counterweight of concern at the mixed picture presented at the KS3 phase of education. These reflections highlighted issues of both children`s potential, as well as lost opportunities further to their school music education experience.

Situating early years musical play within the broader national context, it soon became clear that the world of music education is complex in terms of vision, goals and objectives. The locus of emphasis remains committed to the conventional skills of musicianship, and to `product-based` outcomes concomitant with performance models. Indeed, the current National Plan for Music Education (DfE/DCMS, 2011) places great emphasis on succession planning, providing progression routes for young musicians to become professional singers and instrumental performers for our national orchestras and choirs. A paragraph entitled `Driving progression and excellence in music education` is incorporated into the Executive summary of the NMPE. This section includes the statement that "National Youth Music Organisations remaining the pinnacle of musical achievement to which all children and young people can aspire" (DfE/DCMS, 2011, p. 7). Whilst this is a worthy consideration, it does present an insular and elitist vision for music, perhaps losing sight of the essential understanding of entitlement from the phrase `music for all` as implied by Article 13 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (OCHR, 1989, p. 9).

My research journey has broadened my vision and equipped me with a greater breadth and depth of understanding of the Reception child`s potential for music, as well as the challenges facing the Reception class teacher. My commitment to a broad, rich and diverse music education, taking into account local contexts, as well as musical and cultural diversity remains strong. Furthermore, this study has confirmed, providing evidence to support my fundamental belief that the purpose and worth of music education lies in its intrinsic value and not in extrinsic justifications. For as Confucius is reported to have proclaimed, recorded in the Book of Rites, rewritten around 213 BC “Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without”.

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## Appendices

## Appendix 1: International early childhood music curricula comparison

An overview of international curricular frameworks and supporting guidance for music for children aged four and five years.

Please note:

1. the international differences in the age children start their compulsory school education.
2. Some overlap between the Early years and school curricula

England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
DfE (2017) Compulsory school age: 4-5 years	CSA: 4.5 - 5.5 (the `Early` period: Pre-school / P1). <b>Curriculum for Excellence</b> (SCFE 2010)	CSA: 5 years. Early childhood <b>Foundation Phase Framework</b> (2015) 3-7 years	CSA: 4-6 yrs: Foundation stage - 1 <sup>st</sup> two years of school
<b>IDENTIFYING FEATURES</b>			
Framework for 0-5 years 4 guiding <b>principles</b> : unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments; learn in	<b>4 Capacities</b> : successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors	<b>7 areas of Learning</b> : cross-curricular - to `form a practical relevant curriculum`	2 reference documents: <b>Northern Ireland Curriculum - understanding the foundation stage</b> (2006) Characteristics, aims,

different ways & at different rates <b>CoEL</b> (Characteristics of effective teaching): playing & exploring; active learning; creating & thinking critically <b>7 areas of learning</b> : 3 prime & 4 specific: 17 <b>ELG</b> (Early Learning Goals)	<b>3 core subjects</b> : Health & wellbeing, Literacy & Numeracy emphasis on interdisciplinary, relevant & localised learning. <b>8 curriculum areas; 7 broad learning principles</b> : Challenge & enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation & choice, coherence & relevance	underpinning principles. <b>7 areas of learning</b> : Arts (art & design, music & drama). <b>Learning through play in the early years</b> : <b>A resource book</b> EY Inter-board panel (no date), presents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rationale for play</li> <li>• 10 common principles of EY education</li> </ul>
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<b>MUSIC</b>			
<b>England</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>
Expressive arts & design learning area; 2 ELG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring &amp; using media &amp; materials</li> <li>• Being imaginative</li> </ul>	Expressive arts; Description of experiences & outcomes <b>Outcomes for the Early Period:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I enjoy singing &amp; playing along to music of different styles &amp; cultures.</li> <li>• I have the freedom to use my voice, musical instruments &amp; music technology to discover &amp; enjoy playing with sound &amp; rhythm</li> <li>• Inspired by a range of stimuli &amp; working on my own and/or with others, I can express &amp; communicate</li> </ul>	<b>Creative Development Area of Learning</b> <b>6 generic creative arts opportunities</b> <b>8 musical skills:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore a range of sound sources &amp; experiment with different ways of making &amp; organising sounds</li> <li>• create their own musical ideas and contribute to simple compositions</li> <li>• sing a range of songs with others</li> <li>• play simple rhythmic &amp; melodic patterns on a variety of instruments</li> <li>• recognise &amp; describe sounds,</li> </ul>	<b>Creative Development:</b> - Music, sound, dance, rhythm - Possible Experiences: <i>See p164 for full description of intended outcomes/ activities/ progression/ provision for i) Experimental musical play ii) Exploring musical instruments iii) Making musical instruments iv) Explore body movements &amp; use imagination</i>



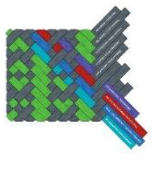
	my ideas, thoughts & feelings through musical activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can respond to music by describing my thoughts &amp; feelings about my own &amp; others' work</li> </ul> <b>7 benchmark statements:</b> - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates actively &amp; uses his/her voice in singing activities from a range of styles &amp; cultures e.g.,</li> <li>• Uses instruments e.g., .... to play along to a range of music styles.</li> <li>• Shares thoughts &amp; feelings about music experiences</li> </ul>	& listen & respond to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on their own &amp; others' music</li> <li>• develop increasing control of the musical elements when making music</li> <li>• make broad distinctions within the musical elements when listening to music</li> </ul> <b>Creative Development outcomes</b> No. 3 (48 to 60m) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They increasingly collaborate with others in their work</li> <li>• They perform simple action songs &amp; nursery rhymes with others, broadly matching dynamics or</li> </ul>	
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	<p>such as live and/or recorded music, peer nursery rhyme performances, school concerts, giving reasons for likes &amp; dislikes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares views &amp; listens appropriately to the views of others, e.g., ...</li> </ul> <p>When communicating ideas &amp; feelings through creative music activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses voice to explore sound &amp; rhythm, e.g., ...</li> <li>• chooses different musical instruments to play e.g., ...</li> </ul> <p>exploring</p>	<p>other musical elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They contribute to sound stories, making choices about the sounds to be used.</li> </ul> <p>Through making music &amp; listening, they begin to show an awareness of some musical elements</p>	
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	<p>sound &amp; rhythm e.g., ...</p> <p>uses technology to capture sound, e.g., ...</p>		
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ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR MUSIC			
England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
<p>Development Matters (2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to build a repertoire of songs and dances.</li> <li>• Explores the different sounds of instruments</li> </ul> <p><b>ELG</b> Children use what they have learnt about media &amp; materials in original ways, thinking about uses &amp; purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts &amp; feelings through design &amp; technology, art, music, dance, role play &amp; stories.</p>	<p>Appendix - Explanations and glossary: Music</p>		
Ireland	Australia	New Zealand	
<p>CSA: 4 or 5 years The `Aistear` (journey</p>	<p>CSA: 4 or 5 yrs `Belonging, Being &amp; Becoming`; The EY Learning Framework for Australia (2010)</p>	<p>CSA: 5-6 yrs. (Y 1: 5 yrs old) `Te whāriki`: <b>Early Childhood curriculum</b> (2017)</p>	
IDENTIFYING FEATURES			
<b>The Early Childhood Curriculum</b>	<b>3 inter-related elements:</b> belonging, being	Symbolic `whāriki` or woven mat - a	

<p><b>Framework (2009):</b> 0-6 years 3 groups of <b>12 principles</b> of early learning &amp; development (with statement &amp; explanation): - <b>1) children and their lives in early childhood:</b> (uniqueness/equality &amp; diversity/citizens <b>2) children's connections with others:</b> (relationships/ parents, family &amp; community/ the adult's role) <b>3) how children learn and develop:</b> (holistic learning &amp; development/ active learning/play &amp; hands-on experiences/ relevant &amp; meaningful experiences/ communication &amp; language/the</p>	<p>&amp; becoming (0-5 yrs) <i>see p11 for diagram</i> <b>5 Principles</b> (Secure, respectful &amp; reciprocal relationships/ Partnerships/ High expectations &amp; equity/Respect for diversity /Ongoing learning &amp; reflective practice) <b>Practice</b> repertoire (Holistic/ Responsive to children/ learning through play/ intentional teaching/ create physical &amp; social learning environments/ value cultural &amp; social contexts/ continuity &amp; transition/ assess &amp; monitor</p>	<p>metaphor for the ECC. <i>See p. 10 for image</i> <b>Bi-cultural framing</b> <b>Vision:</b> children are: "<i>competent &amp; confident learners &amp; communicators, healthy in mind, body &amp; spirit, secure in their sense of belonging &amp; in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society</i>". 4 curriculum <b>principles:</b> empowerment; holistic development, family &amp; community, relationships 5 curriculum <b>strands:</b> wellbeing; belonging;</p>	
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<p>learning environment)  <b>4 themes</b> (See p13 for visual representation):  <i>Well-being/Identity &amp; Belonging/ Communicating/ Exploring &amp; Thinking.</i>  <b>4 aims &amp; 6 learning goals</b></p>	<p>5 Learning <b>Outcomes</b> (Identity/connect &amp; contribute to their world/ wellbeing/ confident &amp; involved learners /effective communicators).</p>	<p>contribution; communication; exploration  <b>Goals</b> for Kaiako (EC practitioner) - characteristics of facilitating environments &amp; pedagogies  <b>learning outcomes</b> are broad statements of valued learning          Overview: 4<sup>th</sup> strand – <b>Communication</b></p>	
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>	
			
<b>MUSIC</b>			
<p>Music is integrated within the <b>theme of communication</b>  <b>Aim 4</b> Children will express themselves</p>	<p>Music is subsumed under <b>Outcome 5:</b> children are</p>	<p>"Languages are the means by which we think and communicate</p>	

<p>creatively &amp; imaginatively.  <b>Learning goal</b> in partnership with the adult, children will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. share their feelings, thoughts &amp; ideas by storytelling, making art, moving to music, role-playing, problem-solving, &amp; responding to these experiences</li> <li>2. listen to &amp; respond to a variety of types of music, sing songs &amp; make music using instruments</li> </ol>	<p>effective <b>communicators</b></p>	<p>with each other". Music is considered to be a <b>language</b>.  <b>Goals:</b> They discover different ways to be creative &amp; expressive  <b>Learning outcomes:</b> Expressing their feelings &amp; ideas using a wide range of materials &amp; modes  <b>Evidence</b> of learning &amp; development: Skills with multiple media &amp; tools ... musical instruments... that can be used for expressing moods or feelings or representing information.</p>	
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		Ability to be creative & expressive through a variety of activities ... making mus.	
ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR MUSIC			
<b>Educators:          Belonging, Being &amp; Becoming</b> Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (ELYF, 2010)			



## Appendix 2a: Pre-pilot Early Years setting music questionnaire

I am trying to build a picture of musical activity in the EYFS for my PhD and would be grateful if you could spend a few moments answering the questions. Please be assured that settings will be non-identifiable and responses anonymous. Julie Digby

1. Would you describe your setting as...

YR in a state school	YR in an independent school
State Day care nursery	Private Day care nursery
State Pre-school	Private pre-school
Other	Please specify

2. Is your setting located in a

hamlet	village	small town	large town	city
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3. Your number on roll?

Less than 25	25-50	50-75	75-100	100-150
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150-200	200-250	250- 300	300+
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4. Age range? 0-5 2-5 3-5 4-5 Other

5. Where and when might children find music resources (e.g. instruments) in your setting?

All of the time	most of the time	some of the time	rarely	not at all
-----------------	------------------	------------------	--------	------------

### Inside

e.g. Music table/  
Corner/carpet time  
Other.....

### Outside

e.g. Playhouse  
Other....

6. When might children regularly experience organised musical activity and of what type?

Singing/actions	Dance/movement	Instrumental	Listening	Other
-----------------	----------------	--------------	-----------	-------

Hello/Goodbye	YES/NO
---------------	--------

Carpet/circle time	YES/NO
--------------------	--------

Assembly	YES/NO
----------	--------

To accompany routines e.g.

To support aspects of EYFS e.g.	Other
---------------------------------	-------

7. Do you follow a music curriculum? YES/NO  
 EYFS Guidelines Setting specific Curriculum/topic led
8. Are children`s musical achievements recorded? YES/NO  
 EYFS Guidelines Setting specific Other
9. Who leads the musical activities most of the time?  
 All staff A musically confident/experienced member of staff  
 Specialist, visiting musician Other
10. Approximately how many children have you observed singing whilst involved in play?  
 None 1 or 2 some half most all other
11. Have you observed this in a particular space(s) or with a particular toy/game? YES/NO  
 YES/NO  
 If so where?  
 Which toy(s)/game(s)?
12. Do these children sing  
 Made up songs children`s songs pop songs other
13. Approximately how many children have you observed initiating their own musical activity, other than singing?  
 None 1 or 2 some half most all other
14. Does this occur  
 Every day 2/3 times a week once a week less often other
15. What type of musical activity?  
 Instrumental YES/NO  
 Home made small percussion other  
 Technological YES/NO  
 Computer tape recorder other  
 Sing and dance YES/NO  
 Other
16. When the children initiate their own musical activity do they....  
 create their own music? YES/NO MOST/SOME of the time  
 or try to recreate a tune they know? YES/NO MOST/SOME of the time

17. Approximately how many children have you observed creating their own music?  
None 1 or 2 some half most all other
18. Are children more likely to engage in self-initiated musical activity  
on their own or with friend(s) both
19. What are your concerns about music in your setting?
20. What would you describe as the musical highlights of your setting?

*Thank you very much for your time.*

## Appendix 2b: Pre pilot ITE questionnaire

### Initial teacher education music questionnaire

I am trying to learn more about the music component of the initial teacher training courses and the different pathways to teaching in the Early Years for my PhD. I value your input into this and would be grateful if you could spend a few moments answering the questions below. Please be assured that all information gathered will be confidential and non-identifiable. Many thanks. Julie Digby

1. Did you train as an EYFS teacher?    YES/NO
  
2. Which age group?      3 – 7              5-7              7 – 11              Other
  
3. In which period did you train?  
1970`s    1980`s              1990`s              2000`s              2010`s
  
4. What was your initial teacher training qualification?  
CEd.              BEd.              PGCE              Other
  
5. 1 year course **YES/NO**    2 year course **YES/NO**    3 year course **YES/NO**  
4 year course **YES/NO**
  
6. How many hours were set aside for music in your initial teacher training course?  
(*please circle*)  
1 hour per week/month/term              Other  
2 hour per week/month/term  
3 hour per week/month/term  
4 hour per week/month/term
  
7. Which aspects of the music course do you consider to have been the most useful?
  
8. What aspects of music do you think should have been included?
  
9. Please could you describe any opportunities for CPD in EYFS music, after your ITE.

### Appendix 3: Offline version of the (*Google Forms*) questionnaire **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Dear Colleague,

I am a local music teacher studying for a PhD at the Institute of Education in London. My thesis researches music learning and development in the Reception class at school. I am writing to you as a Reception class teacher to ask if you would complete an attached, online questionnaire, please see the link below, and return it as soon as possible. It should take 15 minutes.

Your reply will be treated as confidential and responses, anonymous. I am happy to email you a brief summary of the findings of my research once it is completed, probably next term. Please write your email address at the end of the questionnaire. I hope you will find them both interesting and helpful to your work.

The questionnaire includes an invitation to interview should you be willing to be further involved in this research study. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,  
Julie Digby

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

#### Section 1: The nature of musical learning

*This section is asking about a) daily musical routines b) teacher led and c) child-initiated music learning.*

*Please tick the box that most applies.*

#### a) Daily Musical Routines

1. We sing greeting/farewell song(s)  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
2. The children sing in assembly  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
3. We sing instructions e.g. for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
4. We use instrument(s) as a signal e.g. for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
5. We use recorded music as a signal e.g. for tidying up/lining up/gathering/gaining attention  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
6. We use recorded music to accompany routine activities e.g. snack time  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**

7. We sing at carpet time  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
8. We dance to music at carpet time  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
9. We play soundmakers/instruments at carpet time  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
10. We listen to recorded music at carpet time  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**

**b) Teacher led music learning**

*Please indicate which areas of the foundation stage you regularly incorporate musical activities.*

Prime areas of learning:

11. We use musical activities in Communication and language      **YES**      **NO**  
 12. We use musical activities in Physical development      **YES**      **NO**  
 13. We use musical activities in Personal social and emotional development **YES**      **NO**

Specific areas of learning:

14. We use musical activities in Literacy      **YES**      **NO**  
 15. We use musical activities in Mathematics      **YES**      **NO**  
 16. We use musical activities Understanding of the world      **YES**      **NO**  
 17. We use musical activities in Expressive arts and design (other than music) **YES**      **NO**

*If YES, please select which musical activities you use. Tick all that apply.*

Prime areas of learning:

18. Communication and language  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**
19. Physical development  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**
20. Personal social and emotional development  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**

Specific areas of learning:

21. Literacy  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**
22. Mathematics  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**
23. Understanding of the world  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**
24. Expressive arts and design (other than music)  
**Singing/ voice      Dance/movement      Instruments/soundmakers      Listening      Music I.T.      Other**

c) **Child-initiated music learning**

In this section you will be asked about:

- i) the resources children have access to, inside and outside, to stimulate music learning.
- ii) Your observations as to the type of music learning taking place

Please tick the box that most applies

25. Soundmakers/instruments are *laid out*  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
26. Dressing up and/or props are *accessible*  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
27. A stage area is available  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
28. A microphone is available  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
29. An audio player is accessible  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
30. A computer/IPAD is accessible with musical activities  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
31. Musical toys/books are laid out  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
32. Approximately how many children have you observed singing whilst engaged in child-initiated learning?  
**All      most      half      some      none**
33. How often does this occur?  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
34. Approximately how many children have you observed Initiating their own musical activity OTHER than singing?  
**All      most      half      some      none**
35. How often does this occur?  
**Every day      some days      occasionally      rarely      not at all**
36. Do you observe singing and dancing? **YES      NO**
37. If yes, who sings and dances?  
**All girls      mostly girls      equal mix      mostly boys      all boys**
38. Do you observe instrumental play? **YES      NO**
39. If yes, who plays?  
**All girls      mostly girls      equal mix      mostly boys      all boys**
40. Do you observe technological music play? **YES      NO**
41. If yes, who plays with music technology?  
**All girls      mostly girls      equal mix      mostly boys      all boys**
42. Do you observe children recreating a tune they know? **YES      NO**

43. Approximately how many children have you observed recreating music?  
**All most half some none**
44. Who recreates music?  
**All girls mostly girls equal mix mostly boys all boys**
45. Do you observe children creating their own music? **YES NO**
46. Approximately how many children have you observed creating their own music?  
**All most half some none**
47. Who creates their own music?  
**All girls mostly girls equal mix mostly boys all boys**

## Section 2: Planning for learning and development

*This section is asking about planning and recording musical development. Please tick the box that most applies.*

48. The routine musical activities discussed in section (1a) are led by  
**All staff teaching staff support staff N/A other**
49. The planning of the music activities for the prime areas of learning is done by  
**All staff teaching staff support staff N/A other**
50. The planning of the music activities for the specific areas of learning is done by  
**All staff teaching staff support staff N/A other**
51. The planning of the music activities for the music aspect of Expressive arts and design is done by  
**Visiting music specialist school music teacher Reception teacher support staff other**
52. Musical learning is led and modelled by  
**Visiting music specialist school music teacher Reception teacher support staff other**
53. The stimuli and resources for child initiated musical learning are planned and prepared by  
**All staff teaching staff support staff N/A other**
54. Do you follow a structured curriculum framework for musical learning and development? **YES NO**
55. If yes, is the framework **topic led book led other**
56. Are the children's musical recorded? **YES NO**
57. Are they recorded using an in-house scheme? **YES NO**
58. Are they recorded using a published scheme? **YES NO**
59. If yes, which?



60. Are they recorded using video and/or photographs? **YES NO**
61. Are observations of musical achievements written up as comments? **YES NO**
62. Are children`s musical achievements written up as marks/grades? **YES NO**
63. Are these records of achievement, summative, used for reporting? **YES NO**
64. Are these records of achievement, formative, used for planning for further musical development? **YES NO**
65. Please could you comment on how you observe and plan for further musical learning and development of individual children.

### Section 3: Teacher training and confidence

*This section is asking about your initial training, induction and continuing professional development for music learning and development in the Reception Year of school. Please select one answer.*

66. Did you train as an EYFS teacher? **YES NO**
67. In which period did you train?  
**1970s 1980s 1990s 2000s 2010s**
68. What was your initial training qualification?  
**CEd BEd PGCE BA+QTS BSc+QTS other**
69. How would you describe the musical contribution in your initial training, in terms of enabling you to plan for music learning and development?  
**Excellent good satisfactory poor absent N/A other**
70. Which of the following best matches your experience of musical input in your initial teacher training in any given year?  
**Regular irregular one off /stand alone N/A other**
71. Which of the following best matches your total experience of musical input during your initial teacher training?  
**A block of 6 hours 1 day per term 1 hour per week one day other**
72. Have you completed further accredited EYFS study? **YES NO**
73. If yes, please describe
74. Were musical activities incorporated in this further study? **YES NO**
75. Have you completed further CPD musical INSET? **YES NO**
76. If yes, was this provided  
**In-house LA External training provider other**
77. Do you think some/more INSET on music learning and development would be useful?  
**YES NO**
78. If yes, please describe your area of interest or need .....
- Would you describe yourself as...
79. A musically accomplished singer/instrumentalist? **YES NO**
80. Musically confident to lead/model singing activities in class? **YES NO**
81. Musically confident to lead/model instrumental activities in class? **YES NO**

82. Confident to lead/model singing activities in class? **YES NO**  
 83. Confident to lead/model instrumental activities in class? **YES NO**

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = least and 5 = most, how confident do you feel about...

84. Planning musical activities for the prime areas of learning?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
85. Planning musical activities for the specific areas of learning?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
86. Planning musical activities for music learning and development?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
87. Planning for progression in music learning?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
88. Differentiating musical learning and development?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
89. Assessing and recording children's musical development?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
90. Understanding the `next steps` in musical learning and development?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
91. Recognising and developing musically gifted and talented children?  
**1 2 3 4 5**
92. Supporting the musical development of children with special needs?  
**1 2 3 4 5**

93. Please add any further comment on the subject of confidence and support.....

#### Section 4: Your school

*This section asks a few questions about your setting. Please select one `best match` answer*

94. Would you describe your setting as YR in a  
**LA school      Stand alone academy      Multi academy trust      Independent School**  
**other**
95. Is your setting an  
**Infant school    primary school                  pre prep school    Prep School    other**
96. Is your setting located in a...  
**Hamlet                  village                  small town                  large town                  city                  other**
97. The number on roll for your school  
**0-100                  100-200                  200-300                  300-400                  400-500                  500-600                  600+**

*Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and consideration.*

*If you would like me to email you a copy of the findings of this survey, please write your name, title and email address.*

*I would also like to extend an invitation to you to participate further in an interview. Julie Digby*

## Appendix 4a: Questionnaire invitation to interview

I would like to know more about your views on musical learning and development and its role in the Reception Year of school.

If you would like to participate in an interview (about 30 minutes) to be conducted at your school, at your convenience, please complete the following information below and return it with the survey.

Everything you say will be confidential, and anonymous. You will have the right to withdraw your consent, without prejudice, to continue at any point.

Musical learning is important for young children and your contribution to this research will be most helpful in developing this further.

If you would like to participate, please complete the details below, otherwise leave this section blank.

YES, I would like to participate in the research into music learning and development in the Reception class at school.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School address: \_\_\_\_\_

School telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If you fill in this form, then change your mind, you can do so without having to give a reason.

Julie Digby      30 May 2016

## Appendix 4b: The accompanying letter of introduction (Headteacher)

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Dear (name) Head teacher

I am a local music teacher engaged in doctoral studies at the Institute of Education in London. My thesis researches music learning and development in the Reception class at school. I am hoping to survey as many Reception teachers as possible and I am writing to ask your permission for the Reception teacher(s) in your school to complete an attached, online questionnaire, please see the link below. All replies will be treated as confidential and responses, anonymous.

I would be grateful if you could forward this email to your Reception staff and thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Julie Digby

<https://goo.gl/forms/LNRk6glsQfjnOtZu2> or [Bit.ly/2c08hzZ](https://bit.ly/2c08hzZ) or  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ut1gMTfsKl4y5etp4TdksAbIK2NHmJJ2KiXc0Lc9y6o/viewform?c=0&w=1&usp=mail\\_form\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ut1gMTfsKl4y5etp4TdksAbIK2NHmJJ2KiXc0Lc9y6o/viewform?c=0&w=1&usp=mail_form_link)

## Appendix 4c: The accompanying letter of introduction (Reception teacher)

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Dear Colleague,

I am a local music teacher studying for a PhD at the Institute of Education in London. My thesis researches music learning and development in the Reception class at school. I am writing to you as a Reception class teacher to ask if you would complete an attached, online questionnaire, please see the link below, and return it as soon as possible. It should take 15 minutes.

Your reply will be treated as confidential and responses, anonymous. I am happy to email you a brief summary of the findings of my research once it is completed, probably next term. Please write your email address at the end of the questionnaire. I hope you will find them both interesting and helpful to your work.

The questionnaire includes an invitation to interview should you be willing to be further involved in this research study. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Digby

## Appendix 5a: Follow up letter (Headteacher)

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Dear

I am writing to ask for your support. My previous email may have been lost or treated as spam and I realise it is a very busy time of year with concerts, sports days, reports and presentation evenings. If there is any possibility of your Reception teacher(s) having a look at the attached, online questionnaire, I would very much appreciate it. It should take just 15 minutes to complete.

I am a local music teacher engaged in doctoral studies at the Institute of Education in London. My thesis researches music learning and development in the Reception class at school. I am hoping to survey as many Reception teachers as possible and I am writing to ask your permission for the Reception teacher(s) in your school to complete an attached, online questionnaire, please see the link below. All replies will be treated as confidential and responses, anonymous.

I would be grateful if you could forward this email to your Reception staff and thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Julie Digby

## Appendix 5b: Follow up letter (Reception teacher)

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Dear

I realise it is a very busy time of year with concerts, sports days, reports and presentation evenings and my previous email may have been lost or treated as spam. I am writing to you in the hope that I can prevail on you to complete an attached, online questionnaire, please see the link below, and return it as soon as possible. It should take just 15 minutes to complete. All replies will be treated as confidential and responses, anonymous.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Julie Digby



Appendix 6c: Letter to arrange interview  
December 2016

Dear

Thank you for offering to participate in an interview around the topic of my doctoral studies concerning musical experience, learning and development in the Reception class. I am writing to ask if we can arrange a convenient date and time for me to visit you at school? I am interested in discovering more about your professional and personal experiences of music with this age group and I look forward to our conversation.

I would like to reiterate that everything you say will be confidential, and anonymous. You have the right to withdraw your consent, without prejudice, at any point. I would like to record the interview because this allows me to have a normal conversation with you, and I don't have to keep pausing to make notes. I hope that this is agreeable. Thank you again for your support so far in the research. You will receive a summary copy of the outcomes of the research at the end of the study.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Julie Digby

Appendix 6d: Interview consent form  
**Music learning and development in the Reception class at school.**

Thank you for offering to participate in an interview around the topic of my doctoral studies concerning musical experience, learning and development in the Reception class. I am interested in discovering more about your professional and personal experiences of music with this age group.

I would like to reiterate that everything you say will be confidential, and anonymous. You have the right to withdraw your consent, without prejudice, at any point. I would like to record the interview because this allows me to have a normal conversation with you, and I don't have to keep pausing to make notes. I hope that this is agreeable. Thank you again for your support so far in the research. You will receive a summary copy of the outcomes of the research at the end of the study.

Julie Digby

I am happy to participate in this recorded interview and understand that everything I say will be confidential, and anonymous. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent, without prejudice, at any point.

Name ..... Signed .....

## Appendix 7: Ethical clearance

Institute of Education <span style="float: right;"></span>	
<p><b>Ethics Application Form: Student Research</b></p> <p>Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.</p> <p>For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research <a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe">http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe</a> or contact your supervisor or <a href="mailto:researchethics@ioe.ac.uk">researchethics@ioe.ac.uk</a>.</p> <p><b>Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).</b>  <b>Please attach all supporting documents and letters.</b></p> <p><i>For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.</i></p>	
<b>Section 1: Project details</b>	
	Project title
<b>a.</b>	Teacher`s confidence with regard to the development of musical learning of children in the reception year of school.
<b>b.</b>	Student name <span style="float: right;">JD</span>
<b>c.</b>	Supervisor/Personal Tutor <span style="float: right;">GW</span>
<b>d.</b>	Department <span style="float: right;">CCM</span>

		PhD/MPhil <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EdD <input type="checkbox"/> MRes <input type="checkbox"/> DEdPsy <input type="checkbox"/> MTeach <input type="checkbox"/> MA/MSc <input type="checkbox"/> ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma (state which) <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (state which)
<b>e.</b>	Course category (Tick one)	
<b>f.</b>	Course/module title	
<b>g.</b>	<b>If applicable</b> , state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.	N/A
<b>h.</b>	Intended research start date	01.05.2016
<b>i.</b>	Intended research end date	01.05.2017
<b>j.</b>	Country fieldwork will be conducted in  <i>If research to be conducted abroad please check <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk">www.fco.gov.uk</a> and submit a completed travel insurance form to Serena Ezra (<a href="mailto:s.ezra@ucl.ac.uk">s.ezra@ucl.ac.uk</a>) in UCL Finance (see guidelines). This form can be found here (you will need your UCL login details available): <a href="https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm">https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm</a></i>	ENGLAND
<b>k.</b>	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?	



Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	External Committee Name:
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ⇒ go to Section 2	Date of Approval:
<p><b>If yes:</b> - Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.</p> <p>- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.</p>	
<p><b>Note:</b> Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the <a href="#">National Research Ethics Service (NRES)</a> or <a href="#">Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC)</a>. In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.</p>	
<p><b>Section 2: Project summary</b></p>	
<p><b>Research methods</b> (tick all that apply)</p> <p>Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).</p>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Action research <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Literature review	<input type="checkbox"/> Controlled trial/other intervention study <input type="checkbox"/> use of personal records <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic review ⇒ <i>if only method used go to Section 5.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data analysis ⇒ <i>if secondary analysis used go to Section 6.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups <input type="checkbox"/> Other, give details:
<p><b>Please provide an overview of your research.</b> This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).</p>	

The research seeks to examine the basis for effective support of the musical learning and development of children in the Reception year at primary school, including the implications for teacher preparation. The aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the nature of teacher's confidence with regard to the promotion of musical learning in the Reception year at school, with a view to gain an understanding of the nature of support that is required, if any, to enable teachers to help children develop their innate musicality within an early years, Reception class setting. There is a need to investigate what musical learning takes place, how teachers plan and prepare for this, whether their subject and pedagogical knowledge is sufficient for this task and if not what training and support might be necessary. The research questions include:

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training do Reception teachers feel they need?

As the aim and the research questions reflect both an exploratory nature, commonly associated with the qualitative methodology, and an investigative nature, associated with the quantitative methodology, it is proposed to adopt a mixed methods approach to this study. The research design for this study will be sequential explanatory as the first, quantitative strand will be essential for planning the qualitative aspect, contributing to the decisions about the identification of individuals to interview, as well as focussing the issues for further data collection. The quantitative strand of this mixed methods research study will take the form of an online survey questionnaire, and an interview for the qualitative strand.

It is proposed to adopt a survey questionnaire to generate initial answers to the four research questions about Reception teacher's confidence in the teaching of music. Questions will be included to elicit an overview of musical events, resources, opportunities and observations in and out of the classroom. The questionnaires will comprise both forced choice (yes/no) and five-part Likert scale type questions, e.g. all/most/some of the time/rarely/not at all. Occasional exemplars and commentary are requested by the use of a small box for a brief, open-ended comment. The survey questionnaire finishes with two boxes to elicit longer responses to two open ended questions.

The purpose of the survey questionnaire is both one of exploration, to discover the depth and breadth, in other words the field of the enquiry, and second to help focus the themes for the interview. The survey questionnaire will first be piloted to make the necessary stylistic or comprehension amendments.

The source of the participants for the quantitative strand will be from two 'locations': (1) those who respond affirmatively to a request from a network of colleagues; and (2) it is planned to approach three to six local county local county Early Years Co-ordinators with a view to offering some early years music training in exchange for an invitation to attending Reception teachers to participate in the study. (3) an on-line survey instrument that can be accessed by anyone with the appropriate background – the weblink will be advertised on professional music education website and through professional networks. This could be construed as purposive sampling as participants are sought out and sampled from a particular population. The counties, located in the East Midlands of England, ..... Contact has already been made with several of these to sound out the principle of participation with Music Hub leaders.

The aim is for an iterative and dialogical relationship between data collection and analysis. Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative strands of data will encourage the data to be viewed from multiple perspectives, so promoting the dual concepts of reliability and validity.

It is anticipated that the quantitative data collected will be computed through the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (<http://www.spss.com>) and that the data analysis software programme. programme NVivo (<http://qsrinternational.com>) will be employed to aid the transcription process for the qualitative data.

The data analysis process will begin with defining the emergent themes statistically the quantitative data and be followed by writing summaries of the qualitative data. Both sets of data will then be compared and integrated into a coherent whole. The collated results of the questionnaire will be submitted to the participants for information and verification. The interview participants will be identified from the survey, i.e., participants to the survey will have the option of being contacted individually subsequently if they wish to participate further in the research.

The aim of this study is to promote sound, professional research practice by adopting clear ethical guidelines. drawing on the best practice advocated in the BERA guidelines A list of ethical criteria and good practice has been drawn up to underpin this study. These comprise the following concerns:

- Respect the rights of participants, ask permission of Individuals at each level of the organization
- Respect privacy and avoid undue intrusion, inconvenience, embarrassment and causing of distress
- Bound by duty to protect participants from physical and mental harm
- Equality of opportunity and inclusion to ensure breadth of consultations
- Informed consent i.e. full, open and honest disclosure with regard to the purpose, required commitment and type of involvement, data collection and dissemination procedures
- Conceal the identity of the individual, group and institution
- Maintain anonymity and confidentiality of data (including data storage)
- Commit to accurate presentation of the process, data and findings by reflecting back and sharing for verification
- Agree and acknowledge ownership/copyright of data, drawings, audio and video recordings
- Communicate ethical principles to colleagues

### Section 3: Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

- a. Will your research involve human participants? Yes  No  ⇒ go to Section 4

<b>b.</b>	Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Early years/pre-school <input type="checkbox"/> Ages 5-11 <input type="checkbox"/> Ages 12-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Young people aged 17-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown – specify below <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults <i>please specify</i> below <b>TEACHERS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify below
	<b>NB:</b> Ensure that you check the <b>guidelines</b> (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).
<b>c.</b>	If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study?  (Please attach approach letters or details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.)
<b>d.</b>	How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)?  Contact made though network of colleagues and approach Music Hub leaders and County Early Years Co-ordinators and KS1 representatives.
<b>e.</b>	Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing.  An accompanying letter of explanation and invitation be provided that explains the research purpose and providing the opportunity for anonymised participation in the survey and, if agreeable, the subsequent interview phase.
<b>f.</b>	How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time?  See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures. Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.  The accompanying letter will request written consent from participants, indicating acknowledgement of their understanding that they can withdraw at any time, for any or no reason.
<b>g.</b>	<b>Studies involving questionnaires:</b> Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	If <b>NO</b> please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.  It is not anticipated that questions will address personal issues.
<b>h.</b>	<b>Studies involving observation:</b> Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If <b>NO</b> read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
<b>i.</b>	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If <b>yes</b> what steps will you take to explain and minimise this?  If <b>not</b> , explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise? The questionnaire will be self-administered and is not intended to address personal issues.
<b>j.</b>	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If <b>YES</b> please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
<b>k.</b>	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If <b>NO</b> please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.  Summative outcomes of the study will be made available online to all participants.
<b>l.</b>	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same as an individual debriefing.) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If <b>no</b> , why not?
<b>Section 4: Security-sensitive material</b> (Only complete if applicable)	
Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.	

a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
* Give further details in <b>Section 8 Ethical Issues</b>			

### Section 5: Systematic review of research Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**  
If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 10 Attachments**.

### Section 6: Secondary data analysis: Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s	
b.	Owner of dataset/s	
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>If no, do you have the owner's permission/license?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/>
		Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Are the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)?	
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	
g.	<b>If no</b> , was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	

h.	<b>If no</b> , was data collected prior to ethics approval process?
* Give further details in <b>Section 8 Ethical Issues</b>	
If secondary analysis is only method used <b>and</b> no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to <b>Section 9 Attachments</b> .	
<b>Section 7: Data Storage and Security</b>	
Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.	
a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.)
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?
* If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are below.	
c.	Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and
<b>During the research</b>	
d.	Where will the data be stored? PC Hard Drive
	Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> * No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e.	* If yes, state what mobile devices: * If yes, will they be encrypted?:
<b>After the research</b>	
f.	Where will the data be stored? PC Hard Drive
g.	How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format? Until completion of
h.	Will data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> * No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
* If yes, please provide details.	
<b>Section 8: Ethical issues</b>	

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

*Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methods</li> <li>- Sampling</li> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Gatekeepers</li> <li>- Informed consent</li> <li>- Potentially vulnerable participants</li> <li>- Safeguarding/child protection</li> <li>- Sensitive topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International research</li> <li>- Risks to participants and/or researchers</li> <li>- Confidentiality/Anonymity</li> <li>- Disclosures/limits to confidentiality</li> <li>- Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)</li> <li>- Reporting</li> <li>- Dissemination and use of findings</li> </ul>
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**Participants and Recruitment** The source of the participants for the quantitative strand will be from several 'locations': (1) those who respond affirmatively to a request from a network of colleagues; (2) it is planned to approach local county Early Years Co-ordinators with a view to offering some early years music training in exchange for an invitation to attending reception teachers to participate in the study and (3) an on-line survey instrument that can be accessed by anyone with the appropriate background – the weblink will be advertised on professional music education website and through professional networks

This could be construed as purposive sampling as participants are sought out and sampled from a particular population. The counties, located in the East Midlands

\*\*\*\*\* Contact has already been made with several of these to sound out the principle of participation with Music Hub leaders.

The accompanying letter will offer explanation of the study and their contribution and will request written consent from participants, indicating acknowledgement of their understanding that they can withdraw at any time. Consent is required only at the outset of the project. Permission from the Early Years Coordinators will also be required as they are the gatekeepers to the training sessions.

**Opt-In/Opt-Out Sampling**

This is the approach to be used when contacting colleagues. Potential participants will choose to agree to participate or not, further to the informative, request letter. Agreement will be noted by signed consent forms and/or completed questionnaires.

An 'opt-out' situation may occur should hand-written questionnaires be distributed during the course of a training session. At this point, potential participants will need reassurance that there is no undue pressure nor negative connotations resulting from their choice to opt out. In negotiation with the Early Years Coordinators and/or Music Hub leaders, potential participants need to be made aware in advance that the opportunity of musical training will be accompanied by the opportunity to complete the questionnaire.

**Benefits of the research**

Participants will benefit from the research as awareness of the issue is raised which may result in further discussion and training. It is hoped that incentive for the second cohort is the opportunity for a brief music training session sharing ideas. Early years into Reception is a critical period for the establishment of early music skills and the grounding of wider benefits through music study, as evidenced in the literature review.

**Risks of the research**

It is not anticipated that any physical, mental or emotional risks will be incurred by the ques

**Anonymity and Disclosure**

Data will be fully anonymised and no identifying features of the participants' name, personal nor professional details will be recorded in the data. This will be achieved by the use of pseudonyms or codes, where applicable. However, as this data is being collected from questionnaires it is more likely to be represented in the form of statistics.

Full anonymity and confidentiality will be promised to participants and this can be achieved by detaching and recording the relevant and demographic details separately to the main body of the questionnaire responses.

Disclosure of child protection issues should not be relevant here as the questionnaires are addressing teachers' practice, experience and observations. However, should they arise, the Gatekeepers will need to be informed.

**Post research**

My supervisor and university department will be informed of the findings of the research. Participants and gatekeepers will also be told of the findings, via email.

**Section 9: Further information**

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

**Section 10: Attachments** Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Consent form <i>If applicable:</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
The proposal for the project	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Full risk assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Section 11: Declaration</b>		
	Yes	No
I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BPS <input type="checkbox"/>	BERA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BSA <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>		
I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:</b>		
The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.		
Name	JD	
Date	22.4.2016	
<b>Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor.</b>		

### Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics* or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines* or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the Institute of Education <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ethics/>.

### Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through UCL.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

### Further references

The [www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk](http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk) website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, Colin (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) *What are Qualitative Research Ethics?* Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use	
<p>If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator (via <a href="mailto:researchethics@ioe.ac.uk">researchethics@ioe.ac.uk</a>) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee.</p> <p><i>Also see 'when to pass a student ethics review up to the Research Ethics Committee':</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe">http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe</a></p>	
Reviewer 1	
Supervisor name	Professor Graham F Welch
Supervisor comments	Approved.
Supervisor signature	GW
Reviewer 2	
Advisory committee/course team member name	EH
Advisory committee/course team member comments	Approved.
Advisory committee/course team member signature	EH
Decision	
Date decision was made	23 April 2016
Decision	Approved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Referred back to applicant and supervisor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Referred to REC for review <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recording</b>	Recorded in the student information system <input type="checkbox"/>

Once completed and approved, please send this form and associated documents to the relevant programme administrator to record on the student information system and to securely store.

Further guidance on ethical issues can be found on the IOE website at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe> and [www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk](http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk)

## Appendix 8: Interview guide

### **Music learning and development in the Reception class at school**

#### **Main Question**

Tell me about your experience as a Reception teacher. ... (music within that)

I see from your questionnaire that you completed your initial training during the ... tell me about that.

Tell me about the role of music in your daily life.

**Additional more focused coverage questions** (including references to questionnaire responses)

Tell me about your (music) planning for this week. (include C.I. learning)

Tell me about planning for musical progression

Tell me how you record learning and development.

Tell me how differentiation in music is managed in the reception class.

Tell me about any music CPD you might have experienced. (LA)

Tell me what musical training and support you feel would be useful.



## Appendix 9: Demographic profiles of the interviewees` school contexts

Demographic profiles of the school contexts and the interviewees (2015/2016)									
Sources: OFSTED data dashboard, DfE Performance tables, DfE Indices of multiple deprivation									
<b>Notes : National average 25.4%</b> <a href="http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/">http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/</a>									
Name	ITE	Qualification	School status	NoR	Location	Free school meals*	IDACI score	IDACI rank	IDACI decile
Isabelle	2010s	BA & QTS	Academy	400-500	Urban village	12.90%	20891	7	0.103
Beatrice	1980s	BEd	Independent	200-600	Rural village	N/A	29667	10	0.042
Frances	1990s	PGCE	MAT	100-200	Town	40.20%	21973	7	0.095
Dawn	1980s	PGCE	MAT	400-500	Town	13.20%	17553	6	0.135
Gillian	2000s	PGCE	Academy	600+	Town	16.50%	11512	4	0.213
Claire	2010s	BA & QTS	Academy	600+	Town	21.80%	6620	3	0.301
Elizabeth	2000s	BA & QTS	LA	100-200	Market town	47.60%	18298	6	0.127
Hilary	1970s	BEd	MAT	100-200	Rural village	N/A	22367	7	0.091
Annabel (SLE)	1990s	BEd	Academy	600+	Urban village	21%	5755	2	0.321

## Appendix 10: Interview transcript exemplar

Elizabeth      007 & 008      Reception teacher    24/3/17  
Trained in 2000s      Mature student, Second career

CONTEXT: Local Authority School Primary in a town 100-200 on roll

0.00 Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time and for completing the questionnaire. The first question is can you tell me about your experience as a Reception teacher? (Elizabeth: With regards to music?) I: Generally, and then music ...)

0.17 Elizabeth: Ok, generally, I'm in a different school from the last time I spoke to you. Um, it's Ofsted say it's in a pocket of deprivation so I've probably got a different cohort to I'm used to, so there's quite a lot of challenging behaviour and high proportion of free school meals, um not too big a class 26 now, 27. Um yeah and it's busy, busy, busy. (I: Ok, so you started, I noticed from your questionnaire that you completed your training during the 2000s (Elizabeth: Hmm) so you've been teaching in Reception Year for...) Elizabeth: It must be five years of Reception, maybe 6, this will be the sixth year in Reception, [started training in 2004/5 and started NQT year in 2007 – confirmed in follow up email]. I've done all year groups 6,5,4,3,2, didn't do one. I had some one's in Reception once but yeah. So, I have taught every year group and now I am safely deposited in Reception. (I: Reception I've been there six years. (I: So why have you been in Reception six years?) Elizabeth: Um I probably like the way Reception is taught much more creatively, depending on what school you are in, Where I am now is a very creative curriculum in all the year groups but I like the 'child-initiatedness' of early years compared to the sort of stricter KS2 curriculum I suppose. (That's where you started)

Elizabeth: yeah (I: Your experience of music within Reception? How would you describe, tell me a bit about that?) Elizabeth: Yeah, um I think, what I'm thinking now, it probably varies from year to year, it isn't not something that stays consistent it is the things, it shouldn't be an added extra, but it's often the thing if you're extra busy, if you've got slightly less resources or different children, that can be one of the things, it's not always, one of the things that doesn't get the focus, when you're focused on something else, it can be the thing that goes, you know. (I: So does it go because you haven't got sufficient or adequate resources?) Elizabeth: yeah it can go if you've not quite got the resources, it can go if you haven't, if your staff, you know if we've got a high proportion of children with challenging behaviour you don't have quite the same amount of staffing ratio you as perhaps you had the year before, erm (I: so having staff makes the difference to the musical input?) Elizabeth: I think, well I think it has this year just because I have got, my TAs's are, I'm deploying them differently, so I think that has affected the free flow choice, the amount of you know leaving musical instruments in the porch, we have them outside, but having them in an area does require an adult to keep an eye on it a little bit more than perhaps crayons (I: Mm.) Elizabeth: Do you see what I mean? (I: Yes). It's a resource that requires, not full time, you don't need an adult watching it entirely, but you do need a quarter of an adult's eye on the music resources. (I: So, are those adults deployed with more challenging children?) Elizabeth: Possibly, yeah, I think that might be what's happened this year. (I: How interesting). Elizabeth: Yeah I think I would have made the choice to put those out when I know there 5 or 6 children who would need an eye kept on them with those resources, I put them when I know I've got that, but if I think today I haven't got that support I might not put that activity out. So, I think it might have affected the amount of time I, because we don't have it indoors all the time (I: Mm) Elizabeth: Depending on what we're doing. (I: So, comparing with your [Grantsshire] school that you were in, you can see a difference?) Elizabeth: Yes, I can, in the amount... (I: So just for a moment can we side-

track to that please... You have just described to me what the situation is at the moment so how would it have been in Grantshire when you were there?) Elizabeth: I think I still wouldn't have had it indoors all the time because it can get noisy and it depends on what we're doing and we just ring the changes, more than anything. It's not as if you leave a resource out all the time the children never go to it, but I think I would have had it, I would have free access to the musical instruments more at Grantshire because possibly only two children would break them, walk on them, you know, or require support, whereas here, it's a bigger proportion of children who I think would struggle to use and then it always spoils it for the other children anyway, so. (I: That's an interesting dimension) Elizabeth: Um which I haven't, I've probably only thought about that because I know I'm doing this. (I: mm) Elizabeth: I think to myself 'Why is isn't it out as often? Why is it on a Thursday evening I might look at the box of resources and think oh I'll do it next week? Just because I'm not sure it can be managed today', (I: Yes) at the moment with all that's going on and some of those children are quite noisy as well (I: mm) and when you've got a certain level of noise in the classroom anyway you don't want, I find if it's something that's noisy children go, everybody goes up higher and again with autistic children, we've probably got quite a few autistic children and that's a sensory, it's going to be a sensory issue for everyone. So, it has to be planned and it's interesting, though, because when we spoke you said to think about using it of personal, social and emotional. (I: mm) Elizabeth: So maybe if I knew how to do that I'd be able to address some of the things, reasons why I'm not doing it, do you see what I mean? (I: yes) Elizabeth: it's almost a vicious circle isn't it? (I: Yes, and it's having the time to do that.) Elizabeth: And it's having the time to do that. (I: Yes) Elizabeth: Possibly in the September term if we spent the time on using the instruments and using them in a personal and social way we might reap the benefits by now when we could allow them to use, it you know. Outside they're outside all the time use all the time because it's not the same issue outside as it is inside. (I: So if there are

instruments outside all the time for the children to use, you obviously haven't got the member of staff keeping an eye and you haven't got the children that have difficulty...) Elizabeth: Yeah well, they're there, it's just, the sort, when I say instruments it's more saucepans and wooden spoons hung up on things... (I: Soundmakers) Elizabeth: So they're hard to break and the noise, the sensory bit, we've got a big outdoor area so if you're in that, it's like in a woodland bit up by some trees and a fence you know they fine it doesn't have the affect on the other children and they are members of staff outside, you know they're probably not doing a writing task outside, so they are looking at what the children are doing and so that level of supervision would be there. Yeah. (I: Ok, Thank you. That's really interesting.)

7.14 Interviewer: So, if you did your initial training in the 2000s can you tell me about that?

7.17: Elizabeth: Oh I'll have to have a think. I did it at Knightington in Markham. It was school based. I only went to college on one day a week and I did two to three days a week in the school, which I guess is, now when we have teacher training they get their day's PPA, I guess it's the same sort of thing, because I had a day at home which was effectively college work. So yeah and I took quite a long time being a Mum and things I did it over two years. It was a course that could be done over one year, but I did it over two years. (I: Because you came to the profession as a mature student.) Elizabeth: Yes, I was 30 something, 34, yeah. I don't know how old I am now. I was 30 something. (I: and the music part of the course...) Elizabeth: Hmm Mm (I: was there much input from Knightington?) Elizabeth: I don't even remember one day. I believe we did because I don't think there was anything we didn't do. I know P.E. was one day and on reflection that seriously wasn't enough, but I don't remember. I don't remember the day. I think it would have been one day or one occasion that we went there because I seem to remember those periphery things, those curriculum things were one day. Yeah. (I: And then in school did you have a mentor that then supported you with your

training?) Elizabeth: Yes, um yes and I was very lucky because she was a music person. I don't think if I hadn't had that, my experience of other teacher training or any other teacher I would have had for my mentor (I: mm). I don't think and also Thomas School, the school I was at, was quite music, they had a strong music foundation and probably two or three confident music teachers, um, so it had value in the curriculum. And yeah but my mentor was a music professional, so music was probably her degree and her focus, so I was really lucky there. Um I saw some really good lessons that I could then learn from and probably still do. If I plan, if I plan lessons now, I will be basing it on things I've learnt from other colleagues more than anything else. (I: More than training?) Elizabeth: more than any other training. I once had music training at Thomas School paid for by the school, the whole school had it, which again shows that they had a commitment to it and it was very good training. (I: So, what was that training?) Elizabeth: It was an after school, you know it was one of the after school, twilight and... It was a long time ago, I remember her talking about getting sort of graphic representations, lots of exploring and then how to get that into a graphic representation so that everybody could almost perform together and it didn't have to be music, it could be pictures, (I: Mm) everybody played on their picture. (I: Was that in-house or was it local authority?) Elizabeth: I don't think it was local authority I think it was sort of a person, maybe private who the school paid, maybe recognised it as a thing that teachers needed and um... It's funny isn't it when you, I've had loads of training on maths and English, I don't remember them specifically, obviously, I must be using them. I've had one bit of training on music (I: that was it) and I can visualise her, I can remember her though and I'm aware that I use that, (I: Mm) possibly because I haven't got anything else, maybe I haven't got anything else. It does impact on me. Early years is a bit young for the graphic stuff, but we do sometimes do that. (I: So, you recall this bit of music training you had there, more than perhaps you do some of the maths did you say?) Elizabeth: Yeah well, I do and the reason I recall it because that's what I

draw on isn't it? (I: Mm) Elizabeth: Because I haven't got much else to draw on whereas maths I've had loads of input for years, so it must all be merging into one. (I: It doesn't stand out as much) Elizabeth: Yes, it doesn't stand out. (I: Your school in Grantsshire then did you have any additional music CPD there?) Elizabeth: no, no (I: and at your current school?) Elizabeth: No. Current school, a lot of music is provided by outside agencies and so maybe they wouldn't see a need for the teachers to be trained, (I: But that doesn't impact on foundation?) Elizabeth: No that doesn't impact on early years, no. Everyone else in the school will be, they are learning instruments to play so I think the school have done something about music, but it isn't impacting on early years, no. (I: Thank you, interesting, about the lack of Music CPD) Elizabeth: In my entire career, yeah. (I: Mm, thank you).

12.06 Interviewer: Tell me about the role of music in your daily life. What does it mean personally to you?

12.08 Elizabeth: Me or at school? (I: no, you). Oh, my daily, weekends, evenings and free time, then it's important. I listen to a lot of music. Um daily not so much because I listen to sort of voice radio in the mornings and I probably don't listen in the evening. But at weekends and relaxation time, then pretty much all the time. I tend to have my own music in the garden. I wouldn't go into the garden and do something if I didn't have music playing or clean the house without music playing. We go to live gigs sometimes as a family. (I: So, you're a concert goer and you enjoy listening to music) Elizabeth: Yes, I do. I don't participate myself, the children do but I don't participate myself. Oh, my daughter plays the oboe and sings in an A Capella group in Robertstown at uni. Um my other daughter um plays guitar and sings and does a few live gigs, bless her, and has been on local radio [cut 2 EPM's]. They play music all the time in the house because I think music education is important. (I: So, you're a very supportive parent of the children's music.) Elizabeth: Yes, definitely and all children, I think. I value it for education because I can see... I can see young people I think very young children have some kind of innate music ability. (I: Tell me

more about that.) Elizabeth: I think ... (I: What makes you think that?) Elizabeth: Just watching them over the years. I think it's almost natural to them because when they do pick up saucepans and spoons, some children do just bang them, but they very rarely just bang them, they bang them, (taps table) it becomes a rhythm eventually, it becomes a pattern, even you know very disadvantaged or challenging behaviour, they very rarely just bang, so they will make something out of it and they like music, you put music on and they behave differently, so... (I: Tell me more about that.) Elizabeth: We use music a lot in the classroom. (I: Mm) Um and they learn as well, don't they? If you put the days of the week for example to a tune, they will learn it. If I try and teach days of the week or repetitive things, I could be doing it all year and it won't, it won't go in by the end of the year. But if I maybe just put a song on they'll know it. So, it must aid learning in some way. We use it to sort of change routines in the classroom. When it's time to do something, I put a different sort of music on and then you don't have to explain, you don't have to use your voice anymore I just.... We have a standard tidy up song, but I change it depending on the theme. We're going to be going into sort of Spring and chickens so there'll be some kind of chicken march song where they cluck about to tidy up. Um, we've got a song about Spring which again will be our wake-up song to put actions to it every morning. But obviously you'll be learning your theme, because it'll have frogs, butterflies, springtime and ... (I: A wake up song?) Elizabeth: We have a wake-up song before we do anything learning so they come in and have their free flow and shut the gate on the parents, and then when I think it's time to do some more formal learning I'll put the tidy up music on, the mood changes, it does go a bit quieter and we tidy up. And then we'll have a wake up song where we move as well and kind of focus on, sit down, now it's time to learn (I: You've chosen to use that as a tool (Elizabeth: yeah) to get the children to focus on their learning) Elizabeth: yeah It's good to wake up, I think the children are pretty much awake to be honest, but just in case they're not, just in case anyone's a bit sleepy this morning, to get our

bodies moving as well. So, we usually dance to, that we don't dance to the tidy one although some people do obviously (I: Mm) Elizabeth: do more dancing than tidying. [laugh] but we're getting there, not much tidying happens and then... It's a routine, they prepared for it. Interestingly, sometimes I put in a different starting point for the dance and I often think they seem to know. So, they'll go, they'll crouch down (I: Hmm Mm) before even I've put it on because they know that this song, so obviously it's a bit of fun sometimes to put a different song on (laughs) (I: to catch them out). Elizabeth: Not crouching, Oh, no I'm meant to be reaching for this one. It's a memory thing, (I: lovely) it's also, quite, it is social because they almost say hello to each other in the mornings because they're all together. Um some of the songs have a bit of a hello, do a 'thumbs up' to your friend and but even if that isn't part of the song, I think, they look at each other to show a little action they're doing so it's almost a little welcome song for each other as well (I: a greeting) Elizabeth: yeah, it is. (I: sounds lovely).

17.10 Interviewer: Could you tell me about your planning for this week please?

17.12 Elizabeth: This week the one I've just done or the one coming. (I: I don't mind, whichever) last week was a little bit tricky because we've had, we've had a sort of curriculum, we've had a Harry Potter day so, and I've had a trip. (I: Ok next week.) Elizabeth: and the week coming is Easter...next week will there be any music? Next week is the last week of term obviously which makes life a little bit... (I: Okay any week) So how I would plan it (I: Yes if you could talk about the planning of the week, how you would plan generally, so for your adult focused and your child-initiated and then after that for the music). Elizabeth: okay, so I would think about the overall theme. We've been doing superheroes, we've just finished superheroes, (I: Yes, do that). Elizabeth: that might be a bit easier. So, I would look at the maths and English first and we do a focus each day. So, maths one day, literacy the other. They do phonics every day but maths one day, literacy the other, so I would start there. What maths do I

want to do? Which days am I going to do it on? I would start there and then think how I would make that, then in the afternoons, then the afternoons would be a lot more creative (I: Hmm Mm) and I would try and get some coverage of all those creative areas in the afternoons (I: Hmm Mm). There's a lot of intervention happens, and so maths and literacy carry on pretty much all day in different groups. So, children might get it two or even three times a day, um, but I try and make sure a `curriculum y` thing happens, um, in the afternoons. Um. (I: By `curriculum y` thing you mean?) Elizabeth: So I would, more knowledge of the world, (I: Yes) it will be a theme and often, reading, we do a lot of reading in the afternoons as well, because it really is sort of maths, phonics and writing in the mornings. It's all on a theme. They will think that they're writing a message to a superhero, you know, (I: Yes) but I know we're writing and then in the afternoons, I'll try and think well I try, it's something from knowledge of the world this week, I'll try and give them a creative opportunity with an adult this week and I'll try and, P.. Physical development weekly sometimes but then other times, this time of year I think well we're outside a lot I may not do a physical one every week. This might be the time of year I might get more music, because I tend to let the physical go a little bit when I think, you know our hands don't need quite as much, we're developing, so I maybe wouldn't do physical development every week now. Um might even get more knowledge of the world because we're outside, so it is a little bit seasonal. But I try and spread those across the afternoons and I don't follow any theme or any what are they called? (I: Schemes) Elizabeth: schemes I try and make it what do the children ... They're into sheep. They've asked me lots of questions about sheep so for next week I will come up with something sheepy (laughs) for next week, but in that I will try and have a creative one we'll do some kind of threading or fabricky thing, um and we'll, next week is a bit tricky, we've got Easter cards. I will try and make Knowledge of the world, we'll find out about sheep. We'll do something to find out about sheep. We can do it that way. (I: So your music planning for the superheroes... how did

that work?) Elizabeth: Um, did we do any music? I'm not sure we did for that one, But I think we did when we were learning space, we tend to. For superheroes we did learn a superhero song and dance. I would have done that with every theme, you know, That isn't`. I try to do more than that, normally, um so we did that superman there we sort of did this, and here was another one about getting dressed as a superhero that we did as a wake-up song. Um. I probably ran out, I did have ideas, but probably didn't get time for them. Oh, we did listen to different um superhero themes. (I: Hmm Mm) Elizabeth: We were identifying superheroes and we were listening to their themes. So we would have Batman and we would listen to um, the theme tune from the films (I: Yes), Elizabeth: just have them playing, we listened to those and we did talk about how it sounded. Um, where I would have wanted that to go, if I'd had a bit more time, and I think I've done in years before, because we make up our own alter egos, so we would have made a theme for ourselves. We would have had some instruments and said, right "You're amazing maths man. Let's make some music for amazing maths man". (I: Mm). Elizabeth: That is the activity that would have happened if we could have found time, I think, but, so we listened to music and we did some singing, but I don't think we created any. (I: And the listening and singing was that the whole group or was that in the child-initiated play?) Elizabeth: Erm, both, the child initiated would have been both, because I would put it on when they were playing and have it in the role play and talk about it, but we did at some point, when we were finding, when we were doing a lesson on What are superheroes? and we did some "You go and find out about Batman, you go and find out about Wonder Woman", so that Wonder woman music listened to the Wonder women music and the Batman group listened to the Batman music, as part of their sort of they use internet and things to find out about them, so and having a theme tune was one of the things they then discussed and talked about. They had to come back and feedback to the class. They'd got a car and they'd got a belt and they go " dd, dd, nn, nn, nn" (I: Yes) Elizabeth: It was part of the finding out. Um, what did happen,

is my two, I usually have a boy who loves music, I've got one this year when they got to choose their alter ego, two of them chose a music skill. Um, so I had, I think he called himself guitar and drum boy, (I: Mm), but he is a drum boy. He loves drumming, (I: Mm), so they were allowed to choose their own strength, (I: yes), so he said his strength was guitar and drum boy, and then so, it's hard to explain, so during that four week period we would say "Ask drum boy". So, if a question came up about maths, we always said "Go and ask amazing maths man." (I: Yes), but equally if someone was dancing around, and I'd say: "You need some music go and ask drum boy." So, we talked about, you know, how music is a strength, "I'll come and be your drum boy, I'll make you some music". There was another one, Rockstar kid. So, two of them chose music as their ability, as their special thing and we valued it. (I: and did they demonstrate their...) Elizabeth: Yeah because they do. It's a particular, that's why we knew that was their strength. They seem to be the ones that lead the band, when they have a band outside, they would be in the band, others go and do it with them. But there are sort of two who, and it's interesting the class identify them as the 'ones who do the music'. (I: Mm) They sort of have, they do have, they identify 'You're the one who's always in the role play', you know, it's interesting what they know about each other. (I: Yes, really interesting, thank you).

24. 12 Interviewer: Tell me about planning for musical progression.

24.14 Elizabeth: Mm, That bit's a bit trickier... (I: You mentioned layering in the questionnaire). Elizabeth: Did I? Mm you might have to remind me of the context. (I: Yes, sure, so musical progression, I think you explained that it's more difficult to do as much music now as you would have done in the past) Elizabeth: I did in the past, yes (I: so that would make progressing their musical skills more difficult). Elizabeth: Yes, it would. So, did I mean? Because I'm thinking, if I think back to the last time, I think I did sit down and do a child-initiated, I think it was space. I think it was hot music and cold music and we had sort of planet pictures going and we were choosing instruments. 'Oh I'm going to play', We had pictures of

planets and we sort of said which ones we thought looked cold or hot (I: Mm) and then they sort of chose instruments 'I'm going to, I'm playing this planet, I'm going to play this, I think it's cold, I'm going to it's a bit dark and I'm going to play these instruments'. Um, so I don't think I differentiate my group for going to music, I probably differentiate according to the sort of ideas, how much they would need support with their own ideas and some children aren't so sort of creative, you know so independent with that. Um, but maybe what I meant by layering was that within that group I would think of children I could progress more than the others. I might be able to ask deeper questions and I would maybe expect that some, for them to be able to explain to me their link, why did you choose that instrument? Whereas there are others I'd think, it's an instrument, you've chosen it, I can't see why it's hot or cold, you probably can. Whereas with one I expect I might say 'Why is that a cold instrument?' and maybe expect them to give me some language (I: Mm). Elizabeth: So that's what I probably I meant by layering, that I might have an expectation and then once that's exceeded, or how am I going to get them to from what I think is okay to pick up an instrument and choose it, but maybe to select for a purpose, or would I model that? That might be the layering. I might say 'Well I'm choosing this one because I think it sounds...' (I: Mm) and then see who I could get to understand that, perhaps. (I: Super, thank you. I think you said "I try to plan a progression/ layering (I don't know how else to describe it) of musical development, starting with activities that are exploratory, (Elizabeth: Mm) then more selecting music for a purpose, (Elizabeth: yeah) then adapting the selection for the purpose (Elizabeth: yeah, adaption and selection) I: Yes?) Elizabeth: Yes, so then, perhaps in that 'hot and cold' if I can get someone to choose that one because it's cold maybe I could then get them to order, so 'Which instrument would be hot, which would be cold? So then we're making more adaptations (I: Mm) Elizabeth: And then I think maybe by adaptations I might think 'Okay you've chosen your instruments play it, now how would we change it?' Which possibly to another child, as not so

progressed I wouldn't spend time on them making some music and then tell them to adapt it, because I wouldn't think they would be ready (I: for that next stage) Elizabeth:: for that next stage just yet. (I: Super, whereas the one that is they wouldn't choose an instrument, they would use the instrument they've got and) Elizabeth: Yes (I: then move the playing on?) Elizabeth: Erm, not probably in that example, but yeah, in another example, maybe I wouldn't be brave enough to do them all together. To move their playing on, does that mean, sort of? I might get them to just keep a very simple rhythm perhaps on perhaps on just one instrument. (I: I was thinking the child that's able and has chosen an appropriate instrument for their cold planet) Elizabeth: ok, yeah (and then you'd want them to adapt it) Elizabeth: yeah (to get to the next stage..) Elizabeth: So just say, err, what would I get them, to do? Erm I think I would probably put in another element, something else, I might say err, say they were just playing one rhythm, I might say `Oh maybe you could change the sound of that instrument` it would depend on what they chose (I: Mm) `Could you play that in a different way, can you play it slow? What happens when you play it fast? ` Maybe change that part of it. (I: Is that sort of thing you would do? (Elizabeth: Yeah, I think so, Yeah. (I: Super, thank you).

28:48 Interviewer: Tell me about music I.T. in the reception class.

28:52 Elizabeth: yes, not much has happened this year. I.T. (J; That's because?) Well I.T., the actual equipment wasn't very good, (I: Hmmm) I think it has been, but for some, you know after three years you suddenly look at it and think `Ooh none of it's working any more`. The iPad's batteries only last ten minutes now, and someone's picked all the letters, we've got someone who does that and so the laptop's really are not very useable and it's only really been the last six months when we've thought `Mm we're struggling with this now`. But the Boss has responded and I am going to be getting some new ICT equipment, so now I've had this time with you I will remember that I could use music. Um I might well have forgotten there's so many other things to do, I might well have forgotten, but yeah, there must be some really good, there must be some great

programmes on there. (I: What sort of ICT equipment do you think are you looking for... hardware?) Elizabeth: Yeah, laptops and iPads, and I thought about recording devices, but I'd have to investigate that (I: mm) Elizabeth: And I wonder if laptops and iPads will record anyway, so I might well have to settle for that. (I: Yes, and then you'll look for software or have you got enough software?) Elizabeth: I'll think I'll start on the internet. We haven't got any software, but I'll definitely start just on what's free and what's out there, because I think you can buy things and they'll not be of any use so I would investigate first, and play and see what actually works in the classroom and then if I found something I really liked, I think I'd be allowed to buy something, yeah, so. (I: Okay, thank you).

30:38 Interviewer: I see from your questionnaire that you use instruments and soundmakers in maths, tell me about that.

30: 40 Elizabeth: Ugh I can't remember now. Oh, doubling and halving, and playing one more and one less. I haven't done it for a while so if you're learning one less, one more and one less is tricky for early years. (I: mm). So It's a little game they can play together, one holds up a number and the other one plays it to begin with and that's enough, to recognise it, play it with anything (tapping) just play six, (I: yeah) so they can choose their instrument. Again, they like it, and they can do it, it's quite independent, because they can just do it as a partner, (I: hmm), and/or then if the focus is one less, then they have to play one less than that number, which is challenging. One more is a lot easier, (I: Hmm) one more happens quite a lot, (laughs), but the other child says `That's not...`. So they're both counting one child says `No, that's not six`. So that one works. Doubling if I can say now we're doing it doubling, it adapts for everything really, because if you're doubling, you can't work the number out by playing, but the others you can work out by playing, so it kind of works. There is another one that I do for that, how else do I adapt that one? I can't remember. (I: That's interesting, it's obviously kinaesthetic and auditory.) Elizabeth: Yeah, mm, and really independent, for me, it's one of those... `Ah I know what I can just get you to do that` (I: Yes) and If



a child is playing, if two children are playing with the instruments, I can come along and say, especially if we've done it that morning, 'Why don't you practise one less?' and they probably will for a minute or two, which is you know. (I: Thank you.) Elizabeth: Just while we're on that, it might not help you, my rock and, my guitar and drum boy gave me an idea, I've got to think. How did I realise? We took a photo for a superhero comic and in it was a number line with some Spidermans sat by the number line, but when he looked at the picture he thought it was a piano and I looked at him for a long time and thought 'Why do you think, why do you think there is a piano in the picture?' (I: Mm) then I saw the number line. And then he said he thinks number lines look like piano keys and this is a boy I don't think could have ever seen a piano more than twice, in his life. Anyway, then I thought 'Well why can't I have piano keys with numbers on?' (I: Mm) Elizabeth: So he has, he has got music powers because he has given me a really good idea. (I: Fantastic) Elizabeth: And then I wondered about phonic sounds 'Can you blend your sounds then?' (I: Yes) Elizabeth: if I put them on the right keys, when they, if they're reading cat, c a t, if they play them together and it makes a nice sound, they're reading as well, but I will have to think about that a lot longer. (I: That sounds really exciting). Elizabeth: That sounds like a little keyboard that sounds like an app (I: So, for the numbers will you use just the white keys or the black?) Elizabeth: I don't know yet I haven't given it enough thought (I: You'll have to get back to me and let me know.) Elizabeth: I was hoping Alice would help me as well, because I don't want it to, we could have some discords, couldn't we? (I: Yes) Elizabeth: to say ooh, maybe adding the numbers, if you add that one and that one, then get the right answer (I: Mm), It might make a nice sound. But anyway, he has got music powers. (I: Isn't it wonderful when they come up with something and you just think...) Elizabeth: Why have I never thought of using a keyboard, (I: Yes) why have I never thought of using a keyboard for numbers or letters? Or even just recognise the letters would be enough. So, I will do that, you can write that down, might make some money.

34:32 Interviewer: I just want to go back one step. When musical activities are happening in the classroom how much is adult focused, or class led/adult modelled (Elizabeth: Mm) or is it more likely to be child initiated? Elizabeth: At the moment it's more likely to be child initiated (I: and then you go and support in that area?) Elizabeth: and I notice it happening and go and support, yes, that is the most at the moment, just because of our class make up and our, things that have been happening this year. But in, In the past I think I would have aimed for an adult led, my aim I think, I would be happy with fortnightly (I: mm) I don't know that I get fortnightly but I would think I was doing quite well if I'd managed to do it fortnightly. Um, certainly every theme, every time I, for superheroes I would have wanted to do at least two if not three I'd have wanted to have done two that I got involved with and planned and out some value to (I: Over the month that you did the topic.) Elizabeth: Yeah, if it was three or four weeks I'd think you know, because you think, because there's opportunities from the learning to channel it. It's a good opportunity when they're so engrossed in a theme that they like (I: Mm) you want them to connect that to a music idea, um, so I feel if I haven't done that I haven't explored the theme enough, because I haven't shown them that when you explore a theme you don't just explore it colouring and you don't just explore it with your writing you explore it with everything, your skills that you've got and so I would want to do it for every theme. (I: So, is it a lack of time, or the children, class management issues with the children that have impacted on your wish to do it?) Elizabeth: A little bit of both (I: Yeah) because that does inevitably impact on time (I: Mm) um, because with the T.A., I can't use the T.A. in the same way and so if the T.A. hasn't managed, we haven't got quite as much of the core subjects done because the T.A. has been somewhere else. That little bit of maths or literacy or reading will be done in the afternoon (I: Mm) which takes a little bit of, half of music half of P.E. and half of something creative. I know that's more than one, but it's, I have to drag it from somewhere (I: Yes), that little bit of time. (I: Okay, thank you very much).

36.38 Interviewer: Can you tell me how you record learning and development please.

36.40 Elizabeth: `Tapestry`, now (I: Hmm Mm) and that`s about it really isn`t it? `Tapestry`. We have paper journals, I do take, things like that and then we look at each child and they`ve got their own little tick sheet, not a tick sheet, a sort of a colouring and we sort of just look how they`re progressing through really. It`s recorded with observations, um, (I: Video/photographs?) Elizabeth: Yeah, videos, photographs and observations. When we do have something musical it would be a photograph or a video normally, because there`s probably a few notes jotting about, I think. That`s how I would reach, I would reach for that photo evidence because it says more than whatever I can quickly write on a... (I: My understanding of `Tapestry` is that they`re matching up their levels with the 40-60 months) Elizabeth: Yes, and the Early learning Goals (I: Yes, so there`s no additional musical...) Elizabeth: No, it will just, it will say 40-60, so it explores musical instruments and then the Early Learning Goal is as woolly as anything, so um, yeah, you make, you make your own judgement whether it`s emerging, developing or secure, I think that`s where our strength in ours is, is that as a team we have a, we have an understanding I don`t know where we get the understanding from, by talking to each other a lot, um we have an understanding of whether a child is secure in that, or whether they`re still emerging or whether they are, you know have got more than that. (I: Super, thank you.)

38.14 Interviewer: We touched on this before, but I just want to recap, can you tell me how differentiation in music is managed in the reception class?

38.17 Elizabeth: Yeah, I don`t think, especially this year, I haven`t ever differentiated by musical ability (I: Mm). I don`t think I know enough about that and probably the other thing is, um, there are other, if I was spending time doing a music, I`m gonna say just a music, but anyway ,just

a music activity, I would want, I would be thinking I need some communication and language here, I need some personal and social time here, so I would a group according to who do I need to talk to me, who do I need to have some creative ideas and I would do it more about their characteristics of learning than their musical ability. (I: Thank you).

39.00 Interviewer: Tell me what musical training and support you feel would be useful.

39.04 Elizabeth: yeah, an early years, someone (I: Specific), specific to early years, yeah who maybe understood that going to have a trumpet lesson isn`t going fit the bill. (laughs) It might work in year three but it`s not going to work in early years. Someone who gets early years and can show me how to do it with a little bit of time and a little bit of resources would be the most useful, I think. (I: Super, thank you).

39.35 Interviewer: Is there anything you feel I have forgotten to touch om that you would like to add to the discussion?

39.42 Elizabeth: Only, because I`ve asked you this another time, is those exceeding children, those children with the gift, um yes it`s a bother, it`s a little worry, and it`s more of a worry in music perhaps than other subjects, because every year I think you see children who exceed (I: and the plan is?) Where does it go? I don`t know where it goes? If you pass it on, I mean in our school they will have lessons and hopefully someone will pick that up during the lesson, but if I`ve got a really good drummer and he`s playing the trumpet it might not happen and I think that`s one of those niggles, I`ve got loads of niggles you know, that`s one of those for every year you think `When am I going to something about this?` And, from changing schools I`ve noticed this in other schools, but now from changing schools, disadvantaged children who don`t, whose parents won`t notice that, um. And, I`m beginning to think and it can be linked to children with their behaviour. The children I know who are disadvantaged, who I think have that extra music ability, um, do have a couple of behaviour issues as well and perhaps if they had that music time, the behaviour issues would be improved and if they are pupil premium children, I would like to see

the pupil premium money spent on a drumming lesson, probably. (I: Absolutely). I don't know how to wave a magic wand, we need to get Rockstar kid and Drum machine man and their powers, but I often think if that child was in a different social situation and had the drumming lessons (I: mm) that child's behaviour may well be better. I can't prove any of that for you. (I: No, it's very interesting though). Elizabeth: But it's not just one year, I am saying three or four, five years I will notice something like that. (I: So you're identifying children in Reception that you think have got some musical ability/gift/talent or musicality) yeah (but your concern is how that can be nurtured and how they can access opportunities?) Elizabeth: Yeah, It's very much comes down to their life chances whether that gets developed, which I get, that's the same in everything, someone's got horse-riding, I understand that, but I also start, think there's a behaviour (I: Mm) issue to that as well. Um, I think it could be used to improve behaviour for some children, because if they love it, because they love it (I: So, what stops that?) Elizabeth: Yeah, so what stops that happening? In my class, it probably would just for me, for this year, I can use it to improve the behaviour, but I mean like as a whole, as that child, as they grow up, as they become an adult to have that to fall back on, a skill, that because they're clearly good at it. It's about self-esteem and things as well isn't it? (I: This is really interesting, so let's try and unpick it a little bit more, so you think for example, that a child if they had some drumming lessons ...) Elizabeth: Mm (it would impact on their behaviour in a positive way?) Elizabeth: Yes (and part of that because you think it raises their self-esteem) Elizabeth: Hmm mm. (What are the reasons? Why do you think drumming would improve their behaviour? Elizabeth: Because they've got an intelligence that they're not using and that will I think that will lead to difficulties in behaviour. I'm thinking of children who are, it's probably an ADHD, it's probably a, just low-level behaviour. People sit and talk about them a bit. `What are we going to do with them? ` You know, parents struggle a bit I think music because if I notice them musically in a positive way, then music is having a positive effect on them, if I make that

connection with that child. Often people talk about this child in a concerned way head (I: Hmm) but look at the music, but when they're involved with music that's not the first thought that pops in your head (I: Mm) You think `Oh look at them and music. They've got a thing, they've got a flair`. (I: So they have a potential, a music potential) yeah, and if you're not having your potential enough, you know maybe other children are better behaved because they're good at writing and they're getting that every day (I: Mm) because people say `Oh I'm achieving today, I'm achieving today. I'm achieving look I'm` learning to read and write`. (I: So you've observed a musical potentiality there and if they had the opportunity to pursue that musical aspect) Elizabeth: Mm. (I: It would reinforce their self-esteem) Elizabeth: Yep, and would in the future lead, just lead to them having happier outcomes, I think. I'm talking, you know I'm` talking about children who are pupil premium children (I: Mm) living in a disadvantaged area, um I don't know but I think it would possibly make a difference. You know It will work for my year in the classroom, I will get positive behaviour, I'm not saying bribery because I'm` going to let you make a drumkit out of whatever you like outside and you can have that every other day, you can play it to your hearts content when it's free choice and you will, I let you do it and you feel happy and we talk about it, but that's going to stop isn't it? (I: As soon as they leave your room) Elizabeth: They're not going to be able to make a drumkit (I: Once they get to year one, it's much more formalised education) Yeah, that's right (which they probably don't` respond to because they're more creative.) Elizabeth: That's right, yeah, so, and I do, you know you feed it on to the other teachers but they've got, they've got their own, and everybody tries to do their best but they've got their own concerns and so I don't` know I think... I think what I've come to is, if all schools have pupil premium money, which I know it's difficult to spend, but if a child who is in that category has displayed some kind, any skills, maybe, it doesn't have to be music, maybe they're good at something else, (I: Mm, art or) yeah, maybe, then I think some of that money is because they're disadvantaged

and if they weren't disadvantaged they'd have gone to drumming lessons at the weekend. So, the money should go to where they're disadvantaged and Where are they disadvantaged? They're disadvantaged because their parents haven't noticed their skill, and haven't given, you know, so I think personally, some of the money let's go and buy drumming lessons. It might not work, pack it in in six weeks (laughs) I don't know, just like you would at home with your family (I: Mm) if you were in a different setting. So I don't know. I can't fix that. (I: That's really interesting, super, anything else you'd like to add?) No (I: Thank you very very much for your time, that was very interesting and helpful).

ADDENDUM (008)

0.00 Elizabeth: Okay, so, one way of getting music into the curriculum the rest of the time is, when, often when it's information literacy we've got to do some research and then communicate it, using a song or a dance is often a way they can choose to show what they've learnt, so for example bonfire night How do we stay safe? We would make up a song to perform about sparklers, so a song sort of 'sparklers are hot', don't touch them, we made up a song about that. Another time we adapted a story, we adapted Goldilocks because Goldilocks went to space, so it was the same story but she was in space and it was an aliens house and actually most of the children wanted to do it via music not many wanted to do it in a role play or a small world or what other way they might have chosen. So, we ended up with a big song called Goldilocks goes to space, which we did. It was a tune I'd heard somewhere and I sort of started them off and we literally made up our own song called Goldilocks goes to space. (I: Fantastic). We use that quite a lot. So, I will say 'How do you want to show your friends?' and they'll say 'We'll make up a song', often to the tune of something from Frozen, but adapted. (I: Fantastic, thank you very much).

## Appendix 11: Research findings

### Research questions

1. What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?
2. How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
3. Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?
4. What support and training in music do early years teachers feel they need?

FINDINGS from RQ1 cross referenced with the literature  
What is the nature of the musical activity in the Reception class?

#### **Concur - no change**

By incorporating music aspects into routines and daily structure, children can experience a classroom musical ethos, but this was not found to be universal.

Overwhelming use of musical activities to enrich, enhance and scaffold learning to accomplish curricular objectives across the learning areas (affective, social, subservient purposes - not creative, cognitive role of music).

Internal constraints such as acceptable levels of 'noise', with its associated disruption, as well as concern that instruments and other resources may be at risk of damage were also evidenced. These concerns persist more than two decades later in some Reception classrooms, suggesting that in some cases little has changed.

Musical learning mostly consisted of opportunities for child-initiated learning designed by the class teacher, with some formal adult input in some cases.

At least half or some of the children were observed singing and/or initiate other kinds of musical play such as with instruments whilst engaged in child-initiated play, some or most days.

Almost all teachers observed children singing and dancing during 'free play' time.

A large proportion of the Reception teachers noted that children tried to recreate tunes they knew and/or create their own tunes on the instruments.

Statistically significant result for the more recently trained, rather than the more experienced respondent, to have observed technological music play in the Reception classroom (2-sided Fisher's Exact test p-value = 0.021).

The quantitative findings from this study support the research evidence recorded twenty years earlier that "spontaneous musical activity during free play ... showed no significant differences between girls and boys" (Sundin, 1997, p. 54).

Integrating songs to reinforce other curricular areas is seen as a means of slotting some music into the curriculum.

#### **Concur – with a contemporary twist**

Concerns were highlighted in the interviews, supported by the literature, that both external constraints (pressure to meet externally imposed attainment targets, as well as concerns over accountability and attainment) impact on the teacher's perceived ability to provide sufficient musical learning opportunities for the children.

Internal or context-based constraints e.g. music played at a high volume could become a sensory issue for those children in the class, impaired with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), were also perceived to impact on musical opportunities.

Reception teachers (61%) were mostly responsible for the music curriculum, although an in-house music specialist (21%) or, less often, a visiting music teacher (13%) fulfilled this role, often in PPA. In some instances, the introduction of the PPA initiative has removed the Reception teacher, the adult who knows the children best (Mills, 1989), from being involved in facilitating musical learning.

A simultaneous consequence is the loss of potential 'upskilling' opportunities resulting from the practice of teaching, as well as further professional development opportunities (Hallam et al., 2009).

**Contradict**

EYFS emphasizes on observing children's spontaneous music play evidenced in findings.

**Concern - further investigation required**

It was surprising to find that almost half of the Reception teachers did not use music to scaffold learning in Personal, Social and Educational Development. It is possible that they were not aware of the impact that music makes this area of the curriculum.

The therapeutic power of music was observed to support children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Children missing out on a broad, balanced curriculum due to perceived internal and external constraints behaviour e.g. additional literacy and numeracy; accountability and performance targets.

Singing and listening activities seldom reflected musical learning as the teachers lacked musical understanding.

The literature recommends that child-initiated music play needs to be recognised, valued and encouraged by adults (Campbell, 1998; Gluschkof, 2005). With the advent of the EYFS profile and the associated observational culture, this may be realised to some extent, but this point may require further study.

Issues of quality, training, delivery of curriculum PPA by 'bought in' specialists and generalists.

Similarly, difficulties monitoring the equal balance, as well as coordinating a coherent provision of child and adult initiated activities may be evidenced.

Breadth and depth of musical experience and understanding was missing, still teachers should be aware of the inherent musical qualities within children's musical play (Gluschkof, 2005). Questions regarding equality of opportunity and access to musical experiences, learning and development.

No substantial evidence of embracing, nor acknowledging the musical cultural capital children bring with them.

Similarly, indications that musical learning coincides with conventional and traditional skills-based pedagogy. Little evidence or creative explorative, adult-partnered child-centred musical pedagogy.

Further study to explore value given and judgements made of children's spontaneous musical behaviours according to the conventional standards of the Western classical tradition and

traditional skills-based practices or performance biases of adult  
recreative music making.

FINDINGS from RQ2
How do teachers plan for musical learning and development in the Reception class?
<b>Concur - no change</b> Nearly half (44%) of the Respondents followed a structured framework for planning musical learning, although it was more likely to be topic led, rather than based on a book scheme. Musically accomplished Respondents were statistically more likely to follow a structured music curriculum framework than their counterparts (2-sided Fisher`s Exact test; p = 0.14). Respondents were generally confident about planning musical opportunities for their classes, however, planning for musical learning was inconsistent among the interview responses. Nearly two thirds of respondents reported moderate or less confidence in planning for sequential musical learning and/or planning appropriate musical activities to meet the individual needs of the children in their class. 80% Reception teachers claimed they did not record children`s musical achievement.
<b>Concur – with a contemporary twist</b>

Almost all the Reception teachers used video and/or photographs, as well as written comments to describe and record their observations of children`s musical achievements. One in four respondents also used formal grading to track the children`s musical achievements.
<b>Contradict</b> Conflicting and contrasting views, indicating formative assessment procedures were not commonly used to develop children`s musical learning.
<b>Concern - further investigation required</b> The more musically accomplished respondents were less likely to use the formative assessment process for planning children`s further musical development. Five participants shared their lack of confidence, understanding and knowledge in the respect of how to differentiate in music, similar comments for `next steps` in musical learning. The interviewees also presented contrary perspectives on the subject of whether the `ages and stages` of the EYFS framework provided sufficient guidance to support the next steps in musical learning. Some participants had commented that the `ages and stages` descriptors, as well as the early learning goals for music outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework were vague and limited.

### FINDINGS from RQ3 & 4

Do teachers feel confident to plan and facilitate the musical learning and development aspect of the creative curriculum?

#### **Concur - no change**

Two thirds of the Respondents did not consider themselves to be musically accomplished singers, nor instrumentalists.

Almost all the interviewees shared their very strong personal music biographies, but these positive music self-identities did not transfer across into their professional sphere.

None of the eight interviewees declared themselves to be a musically accomplished singer or instrumentalist.

Only half said they felt musically confident to lead singing and instrumental activities in the classroom.

Three quarters of the Reception teachers followed an undergraduate route to qualifying with teacher status (QTS), in contrast to the first degree and PGCE route.

Just over half of the Respondents trained specifically to teach children in the EYFS.

In contrast, less than one quarter reported that the music input was good or excellent.

Undergraduate music input tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience (16:39, 41%).

The more experienced Respondents, were less likely to describe their ITE music input as poor, as compared to 52% of the more recently trained Respondents.

Only one interviewee unequivocally reported the music component of their initial training to be a positive, useful experience.

Half of the interview participants reflected an ambivalent representation of the music component of their initial teacher education.

Undergraduate music input tended to be a `one off` or `stand-alone` experience.

Two recently qualified teachers described an imbalance of input, or music `input was not comprehensive` in their PGCE training programme.

More experienced colleagues could not recall the music input in their ITE.

Only two of the eight participants described positive, instructive music teaching experiences on school placements.

Two thirds of the EYFS trained respondents reported that they were more likely to have engaged in further musical professional development than their colleagues.

Ninety per cent of participants would welcome the opportunity to further their musical professional development.

Respondents highlighted areas of perceived CPD need, included planning and progression in music.

#### **Concur – with a contemporary twist**

A consequence of bringing outside agencies into school to deliver music, was the unlikelihood of teachers receiving the opportunity to experience music CPD.

#### **Concern - further investigation required**

Two thirds of the Reception teachers reported that the musical component of their professional training was either absent or of poor quality.

Statistically significant ITE finding notes that the more recently trained teachers reported their music input to be a `one off` experience.

Statistically significant ITE finding that the self-identified musicians were more likely to have trained in the 1970s and 1980s, than more recently.



The apparent inconsistencies in provision across ITE programmes raises questions of quality, equality of access and opportunity, as well as monitoring and standardisation.

Musical experience on schoolteacher placement often haphazard, dependent on the confidence, experience and musical expertise of the teacher mentor, not a guaranteed opportunity, likely to be arbitrary and in turn become a self-perpetuating cycle.

## Appendix 12: Research log

### Questionnaire log

22.4.16: Application to Ethics committee

23.4.16: Application approved

Pre-pilot questionnaires (face to face)

Pilot questionnaires (online)

26/5/16: First pilot questionnaires response back.

"I've just done that survey for you. I have a couple of comments, but they may be as a result of my limited knowledge of both music and the UK curriculum and structure of schooling".

Second pilot response returned 14/6/16 "I have completed your questionnaire. It took me about 15 minutes to complete".

Revised q56, adding a category

Inserted 1 additional question re: observations with the ages and stages of typical behaviour? YES/NO

20/6/16: launch

1<sup>st</sup> wave – 14 emails sent to pre-pilot Reception teachers

2<sup>nd</sup> wave – 34 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools

21/6/16

3<sup>rd</sup> wave - 18 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (East & North)

4<sup>th</sup> wave - 33 emails sent to Head teachers of new schools (central)

5<sup>th</sup> wave - 16 emails sent to Head teachers of new schools (central)

27/6/16

12 responses, 1 anonymous, 11 require a summary report, 5 for interview

6<sup>th</sup> wave -199 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (East, West and North)

28/6/16

7<sup>th</sup> wave- 106 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (North)

29/6/16

8<sup>th</sup> wave – 15 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (North)

3/7 /16

9<sup>th</sup> wave - 26 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (South)

10<sup>th</sup> wave -27 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (South West)

11<sup>th</sup> wave – 15 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (South and South East)

FOLLOW UP SENT to colleagues

10/7/16

12<sup>th</sup> wave -97 emails sent to Headteachers of new schools (East).  
500!!!! in total.

11/7/2016

FOLLOW UP SENT to 50 colleagues (East and North)

Emailed 7 local music education hubs

12/7/2016

FOLLOW UP SENT to 1010 colleagues (central)

20/7/16

A chance meeting with Receptionist at local primary school, 3<sup>rd</sup> Gatekeeper,  
deleted questionnaire.

Further notification received:

Dear Julie, Unfortunately, we are unable to help at this time as this is a very  
busy term. Kind regards. School Business Manager

27/6/16

12 responses, 1 anonymous, 11 require a summary report, 5 for  
interview

1/9/16

Email request to 5 x MEH`s, & 2x EYCC– nil response x 4/some  
response

11/9/16

Email request to known HT. "I am writing to ask for your help please. I am  
trying to disseminate my questionnaire to Reception teachers in Primary  
schools and was wondering whether you would be able to forward the  
message and link below to your network of Headteachers? I realise this is a  
cheeky request but would welcome and appreciate your support."

Response from EYCC enquiry: "...has passed on your query to myself, we  
don't currently run a newsletter/forum for reception class teachers"

15/9/16

Response received: "We would be very happy to complete some  
questionnaires for you in return for some free training sessions."

22/9/16

"As you know Term 1 is super busy. I am not sure at the moment when we  
can fit it in and all be available so I will get back to you as soon as I know. I do  
hope we can fit it in as it would be wonderful to get some much-needed  
music expertise from you".

26/9/16

21 online questionnaires received

Possible strategy explored:

Went back to 7 pre – prep questionnaires, collated data .... not replied to this  
time....35/100 questions completed...

Contributes 35% reliable answers; 7% unreliable; additional 10% across 28-  
not useable, rejected.

3/10/16

23 online questionnaires received

13/10/16

Received influx from Johnstown, offered to do training on 16/11/16

16/11/19

Delivered training session to Johnstown EY network meeting, generated 6 more questionnaire respondents

Gordonshire also sending message to Headteachers and via twitter

### **Interview log**

November 2016: sent first letter arranging interview.

17/11/16: First interview postponed due to interviewee poor health.

Rescheduled for 13/12/16. One audio appliance malfunctioned. Asked questions in wrong order!

17/1/17: Completed EXCEL participant profile. Invited two participants from school in lowest quartile to interview.

24/1/17: Invited two more participants to interview

30/1/17: Interviewed person from third quartile

19/2/17: Follow up letter to four respondents. Follow up letter to arrange interview

28/2/17: Third interview (lowest quartile)

6/3/17: Responded to Supervisor's suggestion to contact recently retired Music Advisor for help, from one of the local regional hubs.

14/3/1: Network training session two more Reception teachers invited to interview. Adapted letter of invitation:

Dear ...I am really glad you enjoyed the session yesterday.

Many thanks for your kind offer to help me with my doctoral research, by taking part in an interview (about thirty minutes) around the topic of musical learning and development in the Reception class. Essentially, I am hoping to arrange a convenient date and time for me to visit you at school please?

I would like to record the interview because this allows me to have a normal conversation with you, and I don't have to keep pausing to make notes. I hope that this is agreeable. I am interested in discovering more about your professional and personal experiences of music with this age group and I look forward to our conversation. Everything you say will be confidential and anonymous, and you have the right to withdraw your consent, without prejudice, at any point. You will receive a summary copy of the outcomes of the research at the end of the study.

I realise you are really busy, but should you have a spare ten minutes in advance of my visit to complete the attached questionnaire, that would be the `icing on the cake`.

Thank you again for your support, I look forward to hearing from you and hope we can find a mutually convenient time to meet in the near future.

Best wishes Julie Digby

10/3/17: contacted IMEC – 2 more potential interviewees!

Dear IMEC, Further to a supervision with .... on Monday with regard to my PhD, ..... [we've] been putting our heads together this week to see if I can increase the number of interviews with Reception teachers. .... has suggested that you might be able to help me with this? I am looking for Reception teachers who would be willing to interview (about 30 minutes) on the subject of music learning and development in the Reception class at school. I would be grateful if you could pass the message below onto anyone who you think may be able to help me. Alternatively, I am open to suggestions about other ways forward and welcome your support. Many thanks Julie Digby