

School of Teacher Education

THE HOPE CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

PRIMARY

CASE STUDY: Music and Early Reading

School: Knotty Ash Primary School

Lead: Veronica Poulter

AIMS:

- To consider and learn ways to be able to use musical resources to support phonological development
- To increase confidence in using musical resources to support phonological development

IMPACT/OUTCOMES:

Before the project, the trainees were asked to complete a questionnaire to gauge their confidence to teach music in the primary school classroom. During the project, regular group discussions were conducted, and at the end of the project the students were interviewed individually to find out the impact of the project. One student commented that 'I've never really liked music properly. I wasn't really interested so all I remember from primary school you know when you do recorders – we'd just be on the recorders' but went on to say, '...and it's something that wouldn't have put together, I would never have put music with phonics. I wouldn't have thought that that would work, but from doing this, you actually see how it can go together.'

The trainees said they gained a great deal from observing the university tutor modelling teaching in music: 'you showed us the body language you need, you showed us the enthusiasm you need to put across when you're doing the songs... and it was good that we watched you teach the children too that was definitely good because we could see how you'd do the song, and then how you would manage the children as well. And how you'd engage them. Because it's one thing knowing the songs, learning the songs at home, but then it's putting that into practice with all the other things teachers have to do in the daily lesson.'

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The students all reported the development of their own confidence and competence to teach music in the early years: 'Confidence was like my main thing; confidence in doing music and knowing how to tackle it because I wouldn't have before. I would have pushed away from doing music on placement if she said 'what foundation subject do you want to do?' And I'd push away from that whereas now, I'd probably say 'I'll do music'. So it's that sense of your professional development – it's kind of gone up a level in music.'

All the students commented on how the children themselves gained in confidence through musical activity: 'and then I 'H' was in our group as well – he didn't really speak the first time at all. And then the last time he was singing. I think it really helped their confidence.'

They all said that they were much more likely to teach music in the future: 'I really have a strong passion to be in the early years when I graduate and whenever I begin to teach and I think 100% I'll use it. Knowing that there is research into it and there are links made. It just sort of empowers you a little bit more to do it. 100%. I really enjoyed it and I think the children really enjoyed it and as you say, being able to see the development and link it to music.'

The class teacher was very impressed by the students, their professionalism, the collaborative way in which they worked and the way they managed the children. She also commented that having watched 'this being done as well, the classroom assistant and I were saying, 'Right that's it, we're going to pencil it in and we're going to do this session every week.' Which we wholeheartedly intend to do. Because the children enjoyed it so much. And we've enjoyed it. And sometimes it re-inspires you doesn't it, it gives you a bit more like, 'Ooh, I can do that!'



DISSEMINATION (INCLUDING RESEARCH):

The project formed part of the tutor's doctoral research into the impact of music on the development of phonological awareness in preparing to learn to read. The findings will form part of her presentation at the TEAN conference in May 2017.

SUSTAINABILITY/NEXT STEPS:

This project will be repeated in another partnership school this academic year.