

In Harmony Liverpool

Impact on Early Years Education: Executive Summary



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Susanne Burns with input from Michael Galbraith



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“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”
Frederick Douglass

*“By encouraging creativity and imagination, we are promoting children’s ability
to explore and comprehend their world and increasing their opportunities to
make new connections and reach new understandings.”*

Bernadette Duffy

Acknowledgements

This report could not have been produced without the work carried out by psychologist Michael Galbraith in observing children in sessions over a month in March 2016. His work has informed the report and his work is quoted extensively throughout and adds a more nuanced and informed interpretation of impact from his specialist perspective.

It is also informed by the extensive support of the In Harmony team and the staff of Everton Nursery School and Family Centre who carried out observations of children over a 12-month period. The case studies contained within the report are the results of this work.

Biographies

Susanne Burns is a senior arts leader, freelance management consultant and trainer with 30 years of senior management experience in the cultural sector, her work has encompassed dance, theatre, music and the visual arts. She worked for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic from 201 – 2003 as Director of Business Development and then for FACT, Liverpool in a similar role before setting up her own consultancy company. She has been evaluating In Harmony Liverpool since its inception in 2009 and has led many other evaluation and research programmes including the Dance Mapping Research for Arts Council England. She was Project Director for Art Works – a special initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – between 2010 and the present and is currently working on the development of a major dance initiative - the Leeds Dance Partnership. She has extensive experience of working in Higher Education as she was Head of Management at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts from 1994 -2001 and continues to work in HE across the UK. She has a doctorate from Middlesex University.

Michael Galbraith grew up in London and played viola with the Goldsmiths Youth Orchestra and London Schools Symphony Orchestra. Michael did Natural Sciences at Cambridge University, specialising in psychology. After university Michael worked in south Wales for 15 months, and then entered the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Training Course in Oxford. His specialist placement was in a service for adolescents and his research dissertation was with young women showing signs and symptoms of anorexia. Since qualifying Michael has always worked in services for children, young people and their families, and increasingly with the younger age range. His interest in supporting families with babies was fuelled by the experience of working in West Everton and Breckfield Sure Start. More recently Michael has led LivPIP, Liverpool Parent and Infant Partnership service, which works specifically with families with children under the age of two years. Michael still plays viola when he has the chance.

“In Harmony...has been **one of the best things that could have happened for him** and a great opportunity for him to be the best that he can be.” (Parent)

Executive Summary

1. Originally inspired by Venezuela’s El Sistema, In Harmony Liverpool uses orchestral music making to improve the health, education and aspirations of children and young people in Everton.

Since 2009, In Harmony Liverpool has offered an immersive programme of music education embedded in the school curriculum in Faith Primary School. From this starting point, an ambition to develop a neighbourhood wide model took root and the Liverpool Philharmonic sought to secure funding which would enable the programme to be rolled out more widely in Everton.

Early years provision has featured in the In Harmony Liverpool programme since its inception and in 2015 a major expansion saw the extension of regular provision into Everton Nursery School and Family Centre along with the expansion of the programme into The Beacon Church of England Primary School.

The In Harmony Liverpool Structure can be depicted as follows:



In 2015/16 the In Harmony Liverpool early years programme engaged 417 children across the three schools and included:

Faith Primary School	Beacon Primary School	Everton Nursery School & Family Centre
58 Children	127 Children	232 Children
Shake Up And Sing	Twice Weekly 30 minute Musicianship sessions	Programme of activity is detailed in Section 1.1 but includes Musicianship sessions, Music and Movement, Songs and Rhymes, Tuning into Children and Parents Sessions.
Twice Weekly 30 minute Musicianship sessions	2-3 year olds session based at the school	Tots In Harmony
Tots In Harmony	Performances and Sharing Sessions	Performances and Sharing Sessions
Performances and Sharing Sessions		

The baseline report for the Nursery School established some key data that establishes important context.

	2012/13 Summer term	2013/14 Summer term	2014/2015 Summer term	2015/2016 Summer Term
Number on Roll	170	135	166	167
SEN	29	24	44	54
Free School Meals	22	9	24	

Many children start within the school at a low level of age related attainment – estimated at 70% of the total intake and there is a large percentage of SEND. Many 3 year olds enter chronologically at 3 years (36 months) but have a development age of 16-26 months. There is a significant challenge to close the gap to enable children to start primary school education at the age of 4 years (48 months).

Each September, around 60 children transition to approximately 25 primary schools across the City and to other local education authorities in the area.

Over half (52.9%) of children living in Everton are classed as living in poverty. This is significantly higher than the Liverpool average of 33.1% and two and a half times the national average (20.6%).

2. This special report seeks to place the early years work being undertaken in context whilst exploring impact through qualitative data gathered on the ground by musicians, teachers and early years practitioners. The report draws on material gathered through:

- Interviews with teachers and musicians;
- Observations carried out by teachers;
- Case study material developed by teachers;

- Video footage of sessions;
- Observations carried out by Michael Galbraith.

Material is structured in four sections:

- Impact on the children
- Impact on the families
- Impact on the schools
- Impact on the wider sector

There are important limitations to the material presented:

- We have not had any control groups against which to assess relative impact through the In Harmony interventions;
- Progress measures are subjective and limited to observations carried out over a short period of time, however judgements made are based on formative assessments including written, photographic and video observations. We would need to track children involved in this first year into the primary years to assess impact over time against children who had not experienced the early years interventions;
- No claims can yet be made for causative effects. It is probable that In Harmony Liverpool has a contributory effect on child development.

3. Policy and evidence clearly indicates the importance of early years interventions, and the opportunity that was presented to In Harmony Liverpool to extend provision into the early years allowed the team to test the specific aims, characteristics and outcomes of In Harmony in practice through working in partnership with Nursery School teachers and practitioners to develop a cohesive early years curriculum based upon them.

The curriculum develops musicianship in nine key areas:

- **Pitch** – through voicework and singing
- **Pulse** – through the beat
- **Rhythm** – through the rhythm of the words
- **Concept Pairs** – use of high/low, loud/quiet, fast/slow and long/short.
- **Instrument Preparation** – developing the coordination needed for string playing through posture, arm movements., whole body movements, finger and thumb dexterity
- **Ensemble** – through team work
- **Tracking/ Reading** – through the development of the skills to read music notation
- **Creativity/ Expression**
- **Listening to and enjoying music**

4. It is clear at this early stage in the developing programme that impact is occurring in four key areas:

- **Impact on the children**
- **Impact on the families**
- **Impact on the schools**
- **Impact on the wider sector**

We have also observed impact on the musicians engaged in the programme and will seek to explore this further in the coming years in order to identify key areas of interest in relation to workforce development.

The impact of music making is contributing in both direct and indirect ways.

There is evidence of direct impact on child development in key areas.

“In Harmony offered...a familiar environment where he felt safe & confident to learn.”

“He often expresses delight through smiling and laughing during these sessions. He is continually growing in confidence and now joins in with all songs and actions.”

“She oozes vitality and is extremely animated throughout each of the observed sessions.”

“The Impact from In Harmony is evident in his everyday play and experiences.”

Through observations and interviews carried out throughout 2015/2016, we have seen positive impact in the following key areas:

- **Calming and Relaxation;**
- **Social interaction and well being;**
- **Teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, impulse control and multi tasking;**
- **Well being and Resilience;**
- **Communication and Language skills;**
- **Concentration/ attention;**
- **Turn taking - leading and responding;**
- **Focus and ability to follow instruction;**
- **Listening skills;**
- **Rhythm, pulse, singing;**
- **Confidence;**
- **Self expression and Creative expression.**

The report contains case studies that are representative of a large proportion of children who have been observed to be demonstrating similar impacts. Statistical data demonstrates significant improvement in age related expectations across a sample of children assessed at entry and then again after 6 months. It is probable that In Harmony Liverpool is not causal but has had a contributory effect on child development. We can see significant improvement in the key areas of Personal Social And Emotional Development (PSED), Communication and Language and Expressive Arts and Design. Aggregation of the data across the whole school population is not possible at this early stage.

There is evidence of direct and indirect impact on families engaging with the programme.

“I cannot believe that this is available to my child.” (Parent)

“It is a privilege for our children to have this opportunity.” (Parent)

“They have developed a stronger bond because they can relate to each other through In Harmony songs and actions.” (Parent)

This is evident through:

- the children;
- direct engagement with the music in the school;
- the ways in which the children take home new skills and share them with parents/carers and siblings.

Parental engagement with In Harmony has been encouraged in many ways:

- Playing in the Foyer as parents and carers bring children in to the Nursery school;
- Attending concerts and sharings;
- Parents music sessions;
- Welcoming parents into childrens’ sessions;
- Open invitations to come into the Music Room in the Nursery School;
- Provision of song sheets for parents.

In 2015, 30 families from Everton Nursery School attended the In Harmony birthday concert whilst 60 attended in March 2016. It is likely that many of these families wouldn’t previously have had contact with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, classical music or other professional musicians. In this sense the work in Everton Nursery School is expanding the role played in other In Harmony schools as the musicians are acting as music ambassadors. It is likely that this is changing the perception of the Liverpool Philharmonic within the communities that In Harmony is serving.

There is also evidence that the expansion of the programme is affecting the progression to primary school and choices made by parents:

“In Harmony was the reason I chose Beacon for my child. It has been **one of the best things that could have happened for him** and a great opportunity for him to be the best that he can be. I am now moving his older brother here too so that he can benefit from it.” (Parent)

There is evidence of direct impact on the **school curriculum and teaching approaches** being adopted and **indirect impact on culture and the institutions**.

“I would not go back to when we didn’t have this as part of our provision.” (Primary Teacher)

A cohesive music curriculum has been developed that is now being transferred across the three schools and has the potential to be applied more widely.

Within Everton Nursery School buy in at senior level has provided the strategic institutional leadership that is perhaps a key success factor to the programme. The value added for the Nursery School, which already had existing music provision has been the more structured approach to musicianship, the presence of professional musicians and the skills sets they bring and the greater collective understanding to have emerged about the way music fits into the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

It is too early to define the similarities and differences across the three schools after a year of the expansion but there is evidence that the impact on Everton Nursery School has been powerful whilst the impact on the early years provision in the two primary schools appears to date to have been less impactful.

There is evidence of impact on the **musicians’ development, the Everton Nursery School staff team development and that of the trainee teachers**.

“We can pass on our skills whilst learning from each other.” (Musician)

“We have skilled each other up and there is a genuine partnership and ongoing learning.” (Teacher)

It is evident that the development of the Early Years work has impacted on the musicians themselves. This is an area for further consideration as the programme moves forward. The skills and attributes required to carry out this work are beginning to emerge and this has key implications for developing the workforce. These are:

- Patience;
- Adaptability;
- Story telling skills as well as musical skills;
- The need to be ‘nurturing’;
- The ability to use physicality, eye contact and body language;
- The ability to co-learn and co-deliver with other professionals which requires an openness and commitment to development and skills sharing.

It is clear that the close working relationship of the In Harmony musicians with Nursery School staff has empowered the Nursery School staff team and we already see music

becoming embedded in more confident ways within the classrooms in all three schools as a result of the work carried out in 2015/16.

The developing CPD programme has included:

- Whole school staff training sessions at Everton Nursery School;
- Early Years Teachers sessions – including teachers from all three schools;
- Trainee teacher’s sessions.

There is evidence of **wider impact on the sector** through the development of a music curriculum and the ripple out effect of training and CPD.

“When you combine high quality teaching and learning with high quality music making you can create great developmental opportunities.”
(Senior Leader)

The development of the cohesive early years curriculum and the development of sub indicators for the EYFS are major contributions to the wider sector that are already being disseminated. There is enormous potential to carry out further research on the specific pedagogical approaches being adopted and to understand better the characteristics that are making the In Harmony Liverpool approach effective.

Furthermore, dissemination of the approach is occurring as a direct result of the linked programme of CPD for teachers. In 2015/16, Everton Nursery School hosted 9 School Direct Tuition Fee Early Years/Primary Trainee Teachers who have two school placements meaning the ripple effect of CPD reaches 18 schools. These teachers will also take up teaching posts in other schools so this could be maximized.

In 2016, working through the North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership (a consortium of schools led by Everton Nursery School), a CPD programme will be offered to a wider community of interest on a paid for basis and this will enhance the dissemination possibilities. Again, there is great potential in researching the impact of this.

5. It is possible to identify **several key success factors** at this early stage that provide learning for the wider sector:

- There is a need for **‘buy in’ at the highest strategic level** within the School/Nursery School and wide ownership of the programme within the staff teams appears to be critical;
- Developing **trust and communication between the two professional groups** – musicians and teachers – appears to be critical in supporting professional respect between teams, reciprocity and mutuality: where the sharing of expertise and mutual learning and support are paramount;
- This leads to **maximising the different skills within teams of professionals** for the benefit of the children, their families and the community;
- The **importance of CPD**, which develops connections and shared learning has led to the teams working together to find appropriate ways to embed music into the wider

curriculum. It has also significantly contributed to the development of musicians as educators and educators as confident music practitioners;

- Pedagogically, it appears that the emergent understanding of the **complementarity of different approaches** has been an important factor in developing the curricular approach and the tools to be used. Placing the child at the heart of delivery and responding to individual needs has been key to the attainment of successful outcomes;
- The **engagement of families** has been a key area of emphasis that is beginning to pay off after the first year with parents/ carers reporting outcomes for themselves as well as their child.

6. The report highlights the impact on individual children and families and it is worth speculating about the aggregate effect of this. As the new Culture Secretary, Karen Bradley stated in her maiden speech in Liverpool on August 9th 2016:

“ treating the personal, individual benefits to a 12 year-old girl from learning the piano as wholly distinct from the overall benefit to society of music is a false dichotomy. For it is precisely the aggregate effect of these individual experiences that will bring about a healthier, smarter, more peaceable, more cohesive, and happier society.”

The report concludes with several recommendations that will hopefully assist in moving the programme forward. The report evidences the progress made in little more than a year in developing a cohesive early years curriculum that follows the principles of In Harmony but applies them to the EYFS in preparation for progression to Key Stage 1 and primary education. The fact that In Harmony Liverpool has been able to achieve this expansion and growth in an external climate that is not conducive to such long-term interventions is testimony to the power of the programme and the partnerships that underpin it. The programme remains dynamic and its potential to have deep and lasting impact on the whole community has been strengthened by the expansion to three sites.

In Harmony at Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Universal Provision

Musicianship for 2 year olds

Weekly group session.

Live music performance as part of a welcoming atmosphere. Child led non-verbal interaction between musician and children using singing to focus on the fundamentals of music.

Musicianship for 3&4 year olds

Weekly group session

Focussing on the fundamentals of music through singing.

Music and Movement 3&4 year olds

Weekly group session

Using the relationship between music and movement to develop skills and make discoveries.

Songs and Rhymes 3&4 year olds

Daily whole class.

Singing and playing together with a wide range of songs and rhymes.

Targeted Provision

Tuning into Children.

Weekly sessions in six week blocks.

Exploration and development of children's musicality and creative skills, using music and child-led musical play to achieve **targeted** outcomes, including improved emotional well-being, confidence, communication and language skills and readiness for school.

Parent sessions

Weekly sessions in four week blocks.

Building understanding of the impact of In Harmony through sessions just for parents.

Community Provision

Live music performances by Liverpool Philharmonic musicians to enhance the welcoming atmosphere of Everton Nursery and Family centre and provide opportunity for small scale family interaction with music.

Tots In Harmony.

Weekly group session

Parents and babies/toddlers 0-3. Child led exploration of music using non-verbal communication as well as songs and rhymes.

Tea and Tunes

A series of informal concerts by small ensembles of Royal Liverpool Philharmonic musicians in local community venues, including performances, talks and demonstrations for the whole community with a chance to chat to the performers over a cup of tea.

Leap into Live Music!

Tickets for a wide range of concerts by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and performances by other visiting artists (including some of the best names in rock, pop and contemporary music). Hosted welcome events and other family activities.

Development

CPD

CPD sessions with In Harmony musicians and Everton Nursery staff to share and collaborate on learning.

Curriculum.

Exploring in greater depths the links between music provision and the EYFS. Creating a bespoke programme that is universally relevant.