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Dunmur, Caroline (2018) *"Am I maybe doing the wrong thing here?" Practitioners' views on providing musical experiences to children under the age of 5.* [MEd].

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Deposited: 23 May 2022

University
of Glasgow

VIA VERITAS VITA

"Am I maybe doing the wrong thing here?"

Practitioners' views on providing musical experiences to children under the age of 5

Matric No.

A dissertation presented in part fulfilment of the requirements of the M.Ed in Childhood Practice at the University of Glasgow

July 2018

Acknowledgements

To my supervisor, Stephen Boyle for his wise words and encouragement and to all the tutors on the M.Ed course who have opened my eyes to the rich possibilities within Early Years education.

To our 'Everything's going to be alright' group - Stephen will be delighted to know that the informal peer to peer mentoring identified in his research is alive and kicking and certainly helped pull me through.

To my parents who shared their love of music with me when I was young, made sure it was a feature throughout my childhood and continue to be there for me now.

To Pauline, my 'official' mentor whose support has been boundless and to all the nursery staff, particularly those that gave their time and views so willingly for this project. Your commitment and enthusiasm continue to inspire me and your well-articulated views made Chapter 4 a joy to write.

To Thomas, Alex and Ben who have put up with a preoccupied and irritable Mum with endless good humour and far too much screen time.

And to Alan, whose support and love never stopped although I know how exasperating I must have been on many an occasion.

Thank you.

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List of acronyms used

CFE - Curriculum for Excellence

GTCS - General Teaching Council for Scotland

LTS - Learning Teaching Scotland

PLS - Plain Language Statement

SSSC - Scottish Social Services Council

Codes for quotes from research participants

Each quote used in this dissertation has been given a code should anyone wish to link the, back to the data in Appendix 3 and 4. The code begins with the participants ID number (RP with the appropriate numeral after), followed by a colon, then either Q and the question number for questionnaire responses (see Appendix 3) or FG and the line number for the focus group transcript (See Appendix 4).

The code for the quote used on the title page is RP5:FG51.

Abstract

This practitioner enquiry explores practitioners' views on providing musical experiences to children under the age of 5. The last twenty years have seen increasing interest in the effects music can have on the brain and its consequent benefits. These benefits start from a very young age. Research shows babies from one month old demonstrate a musicality used to communicate and build relationships with care-givers. As children grow, music has value in the experiences and learning it alone fosters and in the role it plays supporting other learning.

I have studied and worked as a musician and now own a children's nursery. I want to see music's potential to enrich lives and stimulate learning realised in that nursery. I am aware that in common with many teachers and early years practitioners, a number of my staff lack confidence in delivering musical experiences and music is not as embedded in the culture as I would like it to be.

This research is a first step in addressing this issue. An interpretative paradigm has been adopted to build understanding from practitioners' views, interpreting them within the context of my own knowledge and values. Aligned with the concept of practitioner enquiry, this knowledge will ultimately be used to inform and improve practice. Eleven practitioners from my nursery have been involved in the research. They all completed a questionnaire with six of them participating in a later focus group. Data was analysed using thematic analysis supported by patterns of association identified from questionnaire responses.

Practitioner knowledge and confidence and its relationship with the range and frequency of musical experiences were key themes resulting from this process. Participants recognised building knowledge as key to increasing their confidence and suggested ways this could be done. Recommendations developed from these findings propose a range of changes to enhance musical confidence and support high quality provision. The recommendations also consider the role music plays in Scottish education and in practitioner qualifications and suggesting these require urgent review. Strengthening links between research and practice is also proposed.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Rationale
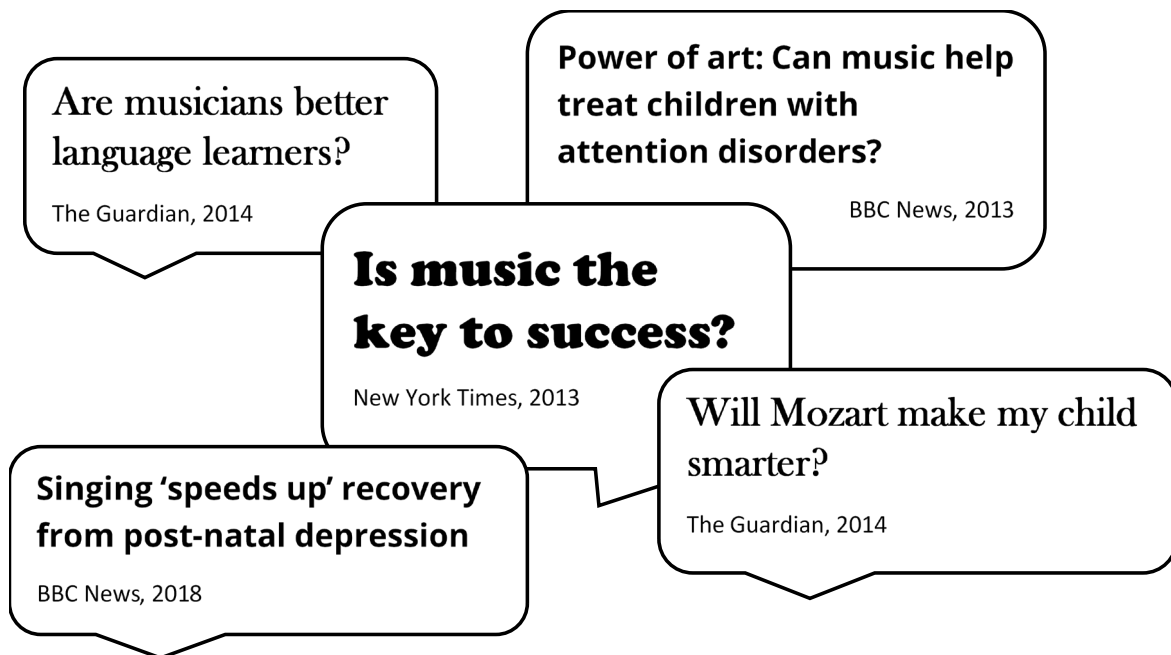
Figure 1-1 Headlines for music in learning

The last few years have seen a surge of interest in the potential for music to 'do good' as the headlines above attest. While some of the claims made on music's behalf are overexaggerated and under-researched, many are based on recognised studies by respected researchers. There have been considerable advances in our understanding of music in the last twenty years, many of them resulting from new technologies which have radically changed what is possible in the field of neuroscience (Sacks, 2011). Increased understanding of the ability of music to affect brain structure and function has been embraced by researchers investigating a wide range of learning. The growing evidence of the benefits of music has great significance for those involved in children's education (Hallam, 2015).

Given music's potential to enhance a wide range of musical and non-musical skills (ibid.) you could be forgiven for expecting music to be enjoying increased levels of attention and funding from those responsible for educating the next generation. Yet for every newspaper headline promoting the merits of music, there is another highlighting funding cuts to the arts or the erosion of instrumental tuition fees in schools (EKOS, 2014). There is increasing risk that only those that can afford it will

be able to access the full range of music's benefits. Whilst there is growing awareness in the public of the advantages music can provide (Lee, 2012), education systems seem to be struggling to respond with weaknesses in curriculum and pedagogy identified (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2014) as well as gaps between research and practice (Young, 2016). Authors write of the marginalisation of music in the curriculum (Hennessey, 2017; EKOS, 2014) and of the intransigent problem of low teacher confidence and competence in teaching music (Hennessey, 2017; Wilson et al., 2008). Ofsted (2012) highlight wide variation in the quality and quantity of music education in English schools with the overall performance being well below that of other subjects. Creative Scotland (EKOS, 2014) report concerns about a similar variation in Scotland and the fact that Education Scotland do not appear to have found music provision worth reviewing since the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence (Education Scotland, online a) seems telling.

As someone who has been able to enjoy the benefits of an extensive music education, studying it to degree level, I find the above situation deeply concerning. Having worked as a music specialist with children and adults with complex needs, I have seen first-hand, the power music has to engage and communicate with people at a profound level. Through this work and my work in a children's nursery, I have experienced the enjoyment, creativity and cooperation stimulated by music in addition to the enhancement it can bring to other learning such as the acquisition of language skills, listening skills and coordination.

I have been the owner of a nursery for the last seven years, and have come to realise how anxious may practitioners are about providing musical experiences. They lack confidence, particularly providing experiences outwith their comfort-zone of songs and rhymes and over the years, a number of adults have connected their trepidation to an adverse experience in their musical education in childhood. There is a worrying potential for a negative cycle to become embedded, as summarised in the following figure (Dunmur, 2017).
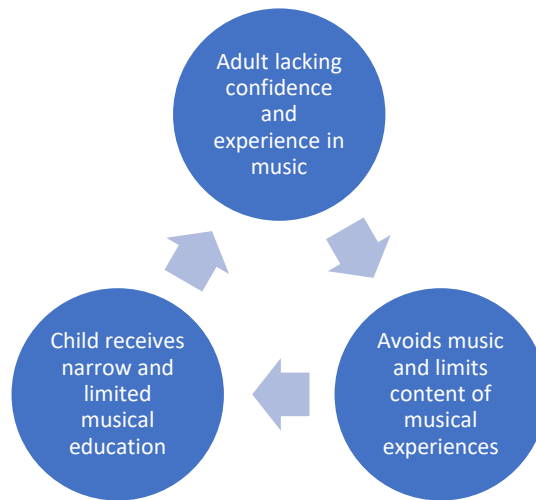
Figure 1-2: Representation of negative cycle of confidence

I am conscious of a lack of breadth, depth and frequency in the musical experiences currently offered in my setting at the same time as being even more convinced of the importance of music in children's lives. Whilst it could be argued that music forms a relatively small part of our overall care and learning provision, I do believe it is a 'distinctive mode of learning' (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2014:9) that has the potential to transform children's lives. As leader of the nursery, I feel a moral purpose (Fullan, 2001) to provide children with access to high quality musical experiences from an early age so they can benefit from the many positive outcomes that music can engender (Hallam, 2015). As overall manager of a staff team of twenty, I feel a responsibility to build staff knowledge and provide coherence (Fullan, 2001) in a subject that, in my experience, many find confusing, mysterious and a bit scary. In this way I look to ensure benchmarks 6,13,19 and 23 of the Standard for Childhood Practice (Scottish Social Services Council (hereafter, SSSC), 2015), relating to supporting professional development and promoting pedagogy and evidence informed practice, are embedded in our culture.

Coming in to this research, my ultimate goal is to improve the musical experiences the nursery offers. This research study is a first step in achieving that goal. The purpose of the study is to gather views from practitioners working in the nursery on providing musical experiences for children under 5. The understanding and knowledge acquired through this process can then be used to inform and shape future development. I want to 'understand…in order to foster positive change in our

joint practice' (Ragland, 2006:175) and ensure that the negative cycle outlined in Figure 1-2 does not become a feature of our provision. This practical application of research carried out within my own setting identifies it as the type of research commonly termed 'practitioner enquiry' (Campbell et al., 2004). Following Burrell and Morgan (1979), my aim in seeking a rich understanding of people's experiences, interpreted through my own experience and values will mean my research will be positioned within an interpretivist paradigm.

Having outlined my research project and the rationale for undertaking it, I will now locate it within the context of existing research and literature. This will help build understanding of the subject and how my research links to it.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I will critically reflect on relevant literature and research as well as consider the policy framework for music in the early years and the ensuing consequences for practice and professional development.

2.1 Why include music in education?

The reasons supporting music education fall broadly into two categories, those where music is valued for the experiences and learning it alone provides and those where music supports other learning and development. Lee (2012) terms these *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* and whilst the terms vary, other authors also make this distinction (Pound and Harrison, 2003; Young, 2009; Pugh and Pugh, 1998). There can be tension between valuing music in its own right and valuing it as a tool for supporting other learning, particularly in an environment where some feel music has been marginalised by other curriculum pressures (EKOS, 2014:78; Hennessy, 2017) and where research has placed too much emphasis on extrinsic value (Lee, 2012).

The complex and enigmatic nature of music and its effects on humans (Sacks, 2011; Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009) make it a powerful learning force but one that researchers and educators can find difficult to fully comprehend and articulate. In conjunction, some would argue that research in early years music education is characterised by its disparate, fragmented nature (Young, 2016) encompassing different cultures, academic disciplines, theoretical frameworks and environments. This creates a complex backdrop for this small-scale practitioner enquiry.

2.1.1 Extrinsic value of music

There is an increasingly large body of research which explores the role music can play in supporting other learning. The studies are diverse in nature as are the results although the majority demonstrate positive benefits to children's development. The literature varies from anecdotal, focused on personal experience in the playroom (Parlakian and Lerner, 2010) to highly scientific and specific (Moreno et al., 2015)

making it challenging for practitioners to assess the significance of findings and the implications for practice.

One of the key areas of research explores connections between music and the acquisition of language skills. Many writers conceive music itself as a type of language and believe learning about music parallels learning about spoken language (Gordon, 2007; Gruhn, 2002). Both are concerned with communication and have an oral and written existence; they require skills in listening, dialogue and later, in reading and writing. The connections between the two and the potential for mutually supportive learning have been investigated in a number of different studies. Runfola et al. (2012) found that a year of intensive music training for early childhood practitioners led to significantly improved oral vocabulary and grammatic understanding amongst the pre-school children that they worked with. Similarly, Magne et al. (2006), Musacchia et al. (2007) and Peynircioglu et al. (2002) examined various features of speech acquisition, finding correlations between musical training and improved language skills. Other studies have concentrated on reading and writing skills: Long (2007) found improvements in rhythm led to improved reading comprehension.

The role music can play achieving other intellectual advantages have been described by Hetland (2000) in relation to developing spatial reasoning and by Geist and Geist in supporting emergent maths skills (Geist and Geist, 2008; Geist et al., 2012). Other research focuses on the physical benefits music can have: the idea of linking music and movement is common in early education and there are a number of research studies which demonstrate improved gross motor control through such programmes (Derri et al., 2001; Deli et al., 2006). In a comprehensive review of much of the relevant research, Hallam (2015) outlines and synthesises evidence from numerable studies highlighting how music can enhance a wide range of non-musical skills as well as bringing other benefits such as increased social cohesion, improved teamwork and enhanced wellbeing and empathy.

While research evidencing the extrinsic vale of music is many and varied, a number of authors argue strongly and convincingly for music education to be recognised in its own right – the intrinsic value of music (Lee, 2012; Pugh and Pugh, 1998).

Authors contend music is devalued if only appreciated for its transferrable effects; that the unique experiences that it brings are lost; and that it is difficult to argue convincingly for music if it is only valued in 'shared' situations. Before looking at the intrinsic value of music, however, this review will outline a relatively recent concept that has emerged from research on infant and mother interactions: communicative musicality. Communicative musicality provides an elemental new perspective on our understanding of how music 'works' and its role in child development. As such, it feeds directly into our understanding of the intrinsic value of music, explored thereafter.

2.1.2 Communicative musicality

Watching videos of very young infants (1-3 months old) interacting with their mothers, Malloch and Trevarthen (2009:1) were able to see rhythmic patterns of engagement between mothers and their babies which were 'musical' and 'dance-like' in quality. Working over a number of years, Malloch and Trevarthen recognised that the infant took an active role in these engagements, showing skill in eliciting and sustaining sympathetic responses from their parent through eye contact, gesture, smiles and short vocalisations. The level of skill, participation and collaboration shown by infants was at variance with views that saw babies as passive, less able, less social beings. Writing about these findings, Malloch (1999:29) used the word 'communicative musicality' to describe how the musical qualities of human communication were exploited by mothers and babies to enable 'co-ordinated companionship' to occur.

Researchers had already identified a type of communication commonly seen between infants and mothers which they initially termed motherese. Mothers talked in short bursts, in a sing-song manner, exaggerating the musical elements of speech to capture the baby's imagination and encourage responses (Malloch, 1999). Dialogues between mothers and babies quickly became established with both participants taking responsibility for coordinating and synchronising their input. Later research found similar interactions between babies and fathers and other care-givers and these same features of communication were found across different languages and cultures showing a universality in what is now termed 'infant-directed speech' (Grieser and Kuhl 1998; Powers and Trevarthen, 2009).

Since 1999, Malloch and Trevarthen have developed their studies around infant-directed speech and communicative musicality and now understand it within a much wider context. In their book Communicative Musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009) they gather together a series of essays by different authors where communicative musicality is a concept which encompasses a sharing of actions, emotions and intentions within measures of time, so interactions between humans involve a sort of music or dance where what we say or do is coordinated and synchronised within a shared rhythm. Authors such as Osborne (2009) and Wigram and Elefant (2009) use the concept to help explain the role music can play in healing; one that has an increasing presence through the field of music therapy. Indeed, Trevarthen and Malloch (2000:5) describe communicative musicality as a 'foundation for a theory of music therapy'. Clearly music is an inherent and vital part of communicative musicality but the concept itself is broader and deeper. It involves a profound reconsideration of human communication and the role music, movement and rhythm play within it. This feeds into our understanding of the intrinsic value of music which is now explored in more detail.

2.1.3   The intrinsic value of music

"The inexpressible depth of music, so easy to understand and yet so inexplicable" (Schopenhauer, 1819, cited in Sacks, 2011:xii)

Pugh and Pugh (1998) highlight music as a fundamental aspect of being human. Blacking (1995:224) wrote 'every known human society has what trained musicologists would recognize as music' and Sacks (2011:xi) talks about humans as both a musical and linguistic species. In addition to the concept of music as an elemental part of being human, there is increasing awareness and understanding that music affects brain function in a unique and fascinating way. Sacks (2011) a neurologist and keen musician outlines how in listening and making music we use many different parts of our brain, auditory, emotional and motor. There is a 'multilevel neural circuitry that underlies musical perception' (Sacks, 2011:xii) much of which remains a mystery despite advances in science and technology.

While still not thoroughly understood, music's capacity to synchronise different parts of the brain is an area of growing interest in the development children's brains. Odam describes music as a 'unique schooling for the brain' (1995:19) requiring intricate coordination between the right and left hemispheres of the brain, the left being linked to speech and the right to the melody of a song. Similarly, Pound and Harrison (2003) identify how creativity and imagination inherent in many musical experiences help ensure the right hemisphere of the brain is stimulated as well as the left (more commonly associated with logic and analysis). Together with Sacks (2011) and Odam (1995), they believe music has a vital role to play in engaging both sides of the brain, developing cross-lateral thinking and problem-solving skills. White-Schwoch et al. (2013) found that elderly adults with only a moderate amount of music training between the ages of 4-14 years, experienced less difficulty understanding speech in later life as a result of faster neural timing, suggesting changes to the brain can be significant and long lasting.

Following Pound and Harrison (2003), Young (2009) also highlights the value of creativity and imagination within music but emphasises the importance of how these experiences are offered to children. There is a huge difference cognitively, emotionally and socially between children actively improvising as part of a group, using voices and instruments and children desultorily singing along to a song on a tape recorder. Young looks to the practice evident in the Reggio-Emilia approach as a beacon for artistic and creative learning amongst young children.

Many of these authors (Pugh and Pugh, 1998; Pound and Harrison, 2003; Young, 2009; Sacks, 2011) identify emotion and self-expression as intrinsic values of music. While the ability of music to evoke strong feelings in humans is still not properly understood, arousing and expressing emotion either individually or as part of a group is seen as another fundamental aspect of being human. While this may be innate in origin, the instinct needs to be nurtured and guided if it is to flourish and reach its true potential. The interactions observed by Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) show this happening in very young babies and Pound and Harrison (2003) call attention to older babies repeatedly asking for certain nursery rhymes so they experience the same fear or excitement contained in the song, safe in the knowledge that all ends happily.

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While the research can be seen as diverse and fragmented (Young, 2016) it clearly demonstrates the extrinsic and intrinsic value of music and the benefits it can have therapeutically and in developing communication generally and at a more profound level. There is clear significance for children's education and learning. The following section goes on to consider this, focusing on the policy framework for the education of children under 5, in Scotland and how it reflects the benefits and understanding of music outlined in the research above.

2.2 Music in education

In Scotland three key documents establish the policy context for the care and learning of children under the age of 5. The Curriculum for Excellence (hereafter, CFE) (Education Scotland, online a) covers the education of children aged 3-18 years, whilst the Pre-birth to Three guidance (Learning and Teaching Scotland (hereafter, LTS), 2010) provides a care framework for children up to the age of three. The later Building the Ambition (Scottish Government, 2014) aims to bring a more unified approach, introducing the term 'early learning and childcare' and outlining connections between various early years documents including CFE (Education Scotland, online a) and the Pre-Birth to Three guidance (LTS, 2010).

Children aged 3-5 follow the Early Level of CFE (Education Scotland, online a). Musical experiences and outcomes for this age group are concerned with performing and creating music using both voice and instruments. There is a focus on exploring sounds and developing understanding of musical concepts such as rhythm as well as performing for an audience and listening (Education Scotland, online b). Together with drama, dance and art and design, music forms the Expressive Arts curriculum area which is linked with developing creativity and expression as well as building a cultural identity (Education Scotland, online c). The curriculum also highlights the opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. Defined as a 'planned approach to learning which uses links across different subjects or disciplines to enhance learning' (Education Scotland, 2012:2) Education Scotland promote this type of study for the opportunities it presents to deepen learning and develop awareness of connections across subjects.   In relation to the Expressive Arts,

Education Scotland draw attention to the stimulating and engaging characteristics that activities in this area can bring to interdisciplinary learning.

The Pre-birth to Three guidance (LTS, 2010) is more concerned with providing an ethos for work with children 0-3 rather than a curriculum. It is based on four key principles: the rights of the child; relationships; responsive care; and respect. While it acknowledges the importance of communication and playfulness it does not underline the fundamental role music can play in child development and makes little mention of music other than a brief reference to using singing and rhymes to support early literacy skills. Building the Ambition (Scottish Government, 2014) places greater emphasis on musical experiences but even then it is limited, highlighting a few examples of experiences that involve song or rhyme, often to support the development of communication.

Sadly, none of these documents reflect the full potential music has to benefit children's learning and development as evidenced by the earlier research and certainly none of them endorse the profound understanding of music presented in Communicative Musicality (Trevarthen and Malloch, 2009). It is difficult to get a sense of the effectiveness of these documents and how curricula and guidance are enacted in nurseries and schools. The Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education 2012-2016 report from Education Scotland (2017) covers early years but focuses on literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. It mentions sciences and IT but there is no reference to music or the Expressive Arts. Education Scotland have reviewed six of the eight curricula areas producing a curriculum impact report for each (Education Scotland, on-line d) but again Expressive Arts is not included.

Wilson et al.'s (2008) study on Scottish teachers' views on teaching the arts adds a little more information. They found primary teachers generally approved of the curriculum content for the arts but felt the guidelines and examples given by Education Scotland were significantly lacking in clarity. Teachers lacked confidence in delivering technical aspects of the arts curriculum, particularly in music and they felt opportunities for interdisciplinary learning were not sufficiently realised. They also expressed concern that the arts were not always valued by head teachers nor parents in comparison to other subject areas. This situation, in conjunction with the

recent statement from HM Chief Inspector of Education, asking practitioners to prioritise literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum (Education Scotland, 2016a) paints a picture where music potentially sits on the periphery of children's learning, viewed as a diverting interlude from more valuable learning going on in other subjects.

While the policies, guidance and curricula above, signpost what should be done and the research discussed earlier indicates what could be done, ultimately it is the practitioners who determine what is done. The next section considers key features of music in practice.

2.3 Practitioners views on music

While there is increasing interest and research involving babies and music, there is less involving children aged 2-5 although there is some evidence that this situation is changing (Young, 2009:11; Burton and Taggart, 2011:ix). There is a particular dearth of research with a Scottish context (Wilson et al., 2008) and so this literature review includes evidence from England as well as research relating to primary aged children.

Practitioners and parents are often aware of the benefits music can bring as a result of personal experience and/or their own musical training. In their paper exploring the rationale for group music activities for parents and children aged 0-3, Pitt and Hargreaves (2017) found that practitioners and parents agreed on the top three reasons, namely it made the child happy; the child socialised in a group; and it helped overall learning. Similarly Greenhalgh (2015) found practitioners rated the development of social skills, enjoyment, and learning through music (i.e. extrinsic value) as well as learning about music (i.e. intrinsic value) when asked what children gained most from music sessions.

This research shows that both parents and practitioners value the role music can play in early learning and child development and are aware of some, if not all, of the potential benefits. In addition, the capacity for musical experiences to be fun and

enjoyable and therefore independently chosen by children makes it ideally suited to a pedagogical approach with an emphasis on child-led learning such as that found in Scotland. Given all these advantages you would expect musical experiences to abound in nurseries and primary schools and yet research would suggest this is far from the case.

Within the Scottish system, Wilson et al. (2008) highlight a lack of confidence amongst primary school teachers in teaching the arts, particularly music. This is also identified in Brennan et al.'s (2017) Manifesto for Music Education in Scotland which reports that the introduction of CFE has done little to change this. This lack of confidence was found in the English system as well (Hennessy, 2017; Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2014; Holden and Button, 2006) and translated into significant differences in quality and quantity of music provision where 'far too much provision was inadequate or barely satisfactory (Ofsted, 2012:4). Even more worrying, strategies to improve provision were not proving sufficiently effective (ibid.). The majority of these findings relate to generalist teachers (i.e. teachers who do not specialise in music) and many criticised the small amount of time dedicated to music-specific training within initial teacher training (as little as three hours in some instances, Brennan et al., 2017). This reflects similar circumstances in early years settings, where most practitioners are tasked with providing musical experiences with little if any musical training included in their qualification. Pound and Harrison (2003) believe the lack of confidence in nursery practitioners in England is getting worse. They felt that the technology which nowadays makes music so accessible leads people to see themselves as 'consumers' not 'producers' of music. People used to hearing professional musicians on a daily basis were deterred from making their own music as they felt unable to match the quality or expertise.

This sense of not being good enough is also explored by Young (2009) although she looks to how music has traditionally been taught in the West to explain it. Using Dweck's (2000:2) contrasting theories of 'fixed intelligence' and 'malleable intelligence' as a framework, Young (2009) suggests there are two opposing views of musical ability, the first believes ability is inborn and largely fixed; the second believes that musical ability can be acquired through practice and learning. Children growing up in the first are likely to turn into adults who have been 'educated out of

feeling that they are musical, creative and imaginative' (Young, 2009:13) and feel uncomfortable providing musical experiences to others. Young expounds the need for music to be seen as both 'learnable' and 'teachable' and for the idea of musical 'talent' to be reassessed. Durrant and Welch (1995:14) endorse a similar philosophy, encouraging musical activity to be seen as 'normal human behaviour' and urging teachers to see the 'musical potential in themselves as well as their pupils'. This philosophy is echoed by Mazokopaki and Kugiumutzakis (2009). In common with many of the writers in Communicative Musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009), they believe that infants have an innate musicality, and this concept is not coherent with the idea of music being a talent that only a few elite possess, an idea often fostered in the Western Classical music tradition.

This lack of confidence potentially affects how often practitioners and teachers provide musical experiences and also the content of the experiences they provide. Confidence comes from knowledge and experience, supplied through training and practice (Hennessey, 2017; Holden and Button, 2006). Practitioners need to regularly engage in musical experiences to maintain and ideally build ability (Durrant and Welch, 1995:14). This point is particularly moot given the finding from Holden and Button (2006) that there is lower confidence teaching music compared to other subjects and Wilson et al.'s (2008) finding that teachers were unlikely to attend training for subjects they lacked confidence in, particularly if an arts subject. Without effective positive intervention, there is every danger that the negative cycle illustrated in Figure 1-2 becomes entrenched and there are some authors who believe this is already the case (Hennessey, 2017).

One of the reasons for this lack of confidence relates back to the 'perceived disparity' (Durrant and Welch, 1995) between traditional concepts of a musician in the West and the musical experience and training that most practitioners and teachers will have undertaken. Our understanding of the term 'musician' generally involves someone who has studied music over an extensive period of time, building up a high level of expertise that is commonly associated with the notion of being 'musically talented' (Young, 2009:13). This conception can become further embedded if schools and nurseries employ a music specialist to cover the music element of the curriculum particularly when delivered in a stand-alone block as is often the case

when music specialists are used by local authorities to cover class teachers' RICCT (non-contact time with children) (Scottish Borders Council, online). Under these circumstances music can become an isolated occurrence unconnected to the rest of children's learning.

There are signs that positive intervention can make a significant difference and a number of initiatives look to build practitioner confidence through knowledge. Siebenaler (2006) carried out a study giving trainee class teachers a term course in musicianship resulting in improved confidence and singing ability. Mackenzie and Clift (2008) found the Music Start project increased early years practitioners' confidence and competence in making music with children. Biasutti et al. (2014) report positive and long lasting benefits from offering trainee class teachers access to an intensive music summer school and Seddon and Biasutti (2008) found a 'blues activities' intervention led to improved confidence to teach music and an enhanced perception of participants' own musicality. Authors such as Durrant and Welch (1995) and Young (2009) write coherently and convincingly that the skills needed to teach music to young children are well within the grasp of generalist teachers or nursery practitioners. However, interventions such as those described by Siebenaler (2006) and Mackenzie and Clift (2008) are not widely available and for teachers and practitioners to develop the confidence and competence proposed by Durrant and Welch (1995) and Young (2009) requires the necessary learning and support to be thoroughly embedded in national qualifications and training. Hennessy (2017) believes the fact it is not significantly limits any progress.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the literature relevant to my practitioner enquiry. It has debated the rationale for including music in education, looking at both extrinsic and intrinsic values as evidenced by research and literature. It also introduces the pioneering concept of communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009). It presents the policy framework for music education in Scotland and looks at some of the consequences of its implementation in Scotland with parallel examples taken from England. Practitioner confidence has emerged as a significant factor affecting music

provision in schools and nurseries and reflection on why that might be touch on different understandings and traditions of musicianship as well as exploring approaches to address the issue. Having set the literary context for the research in this chapter, the following chapter will go on to establish the theoretical context.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Having outlined and critically reflected on the literature, research and policy context surrounding music in the early years, this chapter will now establish why this research falls into the category of practitioner enquiry and explain how methodology and methods will be used to structure it.

3.1 Introduction

Practitioner enquiry is generally small in scale and concerns the practitioner's own setting, the research purpose being to better understand and ultimately improve practice (Campbell et al., 2004). The General Teaching Council for Scotland (hereafter, GTCS) sees practitioner enquiry becoming 'an integral aspect of the day-to-day practice of teachers and other education professionals' (GTCS, online). Similarly practitioner enquiry is an effective way for early years' managers to meet benchmarks 2, 13, 22, 23 of the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC), 2015 promoting the professional learning and development of managers and their staff.

The scale of my project; the fact it is taking place in my nursery; its purpose being to work with practitioners to better understand and through this improve the musical experiences they offer, all affiliate my research with the concept of practitioner enquiry. My motivation stems from the value and passion I feel for music as well as my knowledge and experience having studied and worked as a musician. These elements along with the 'questioning quality at the heart of research' reflect Dadd's interpretation of practitioner research (online:4).

When writing about her experience of practitioner research Dadd's (ibid.) shares her initial lack of understanding of formal research methodology and the issues this created. In defining practitioner enquiry, Menter et al. (2011) highlight the requirement for a justified rationale and approach. In the same way, Tobin and Begley (2004) emphasise the need for 'methodological rigour' in qualitative research. In order to meet these demands, I will now consider the methodology which underpins this practitioner enquiry.

3.2 Methodology

While all research shares a common goal of discovering 'new information' or reaching a 'new understanding' (Cambridge English Dictionary, online) in practice the subjects covered and approaches used are diverse. At a fundamental level, research can be founded on very different understandings of knowledge, values and the nature of being, commonly referred to as paradigms (Somekh and Lewin, 2011:326). Guba (1990:17) defines a paradigm as 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action'. Denzin and Lincoln (2018:97) also adopt this definition whilst Burrell and Morgan use the term as a 'commonality of perspective which binds the work or a group of theorists together' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:23). In practice, paradigms provide a theoretical framework for researchers to position their work within. They outline the nature of reality that the researcher has adopted (ontology), the way the knowledge of that reality has been attained and communicated (epistemology), the role that values have played in the process (axiology) and the best ways to gain that knowledge (methodology) (Denzin and Lincoln 2018:97).

While no one paradigm should be considered intrinsically 'better' (Saunders et al., 2009:108) the choice of paradigm does 'set down the intent, motivation and expectations of the research' (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006) as well as the 'rules and standards' for practice (Kuhn, 1962:11). By choosing the most appropriate paradigm I will be supported to make good decisions about the overall design of the research and the paradigm will also imply the most suitable methods to use (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Ensuring this paradigm is well articulated when writing up my research will help provide clarity over the philosophical assumptions underpinning my methodology choices (Weaver and Olson, 2006) and enable others to better comprehend and assess the research (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015; Näslund, 2002).

3.2.1 Positivism and Interpretivism

In order to guide my decision choosing a theoretical framework, this chapter will consider two contrasting paradigms commonly used in empirical research, positivism and interpretivism and use this process to identify which is the most appropriate for

my research. A positivist paradigm is based on the belief that there is one reality which can be measured or proved; its ontology reflects the philosophy of realism (Weaver and Olson, 2006). There is an emphasis on deductive reasoning with positivist researchers likely to use 'existing theory to develop hypotheses' which are then tested (Saunders et al., 2009:113). Findings either confirm the hypotheses or negate it, thus adding to earlier understanding of the theory. Epistemologically, knowledge is distinct from the researcher and objective in nature (Weaver and Olson, 2006). This means that in a positivist paradigm reality is independent of the people studying it and the researcher 'neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research' (Remenyi et al., 1998:33). Findings should be replicable and axiologically the research should be value-free and exempt from subjective interpretation and bias.

A positivist paradigm is commonly used by physical and natural scientists (Saunders et al., 2009) involving the large-scale collection of quantitative data to verify a hypotheses and thus establish facts or laws (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Samples need to be large enough to support the generalisation of any conclusions and controls are often used to eliminate or reduce any subjectivity (Saunders et al., 2009; O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015).

By contrast, interpretivism rejects the belief that there is one reality with universal laws governing behaviour; instead, its ontology is more aligned to relativism (Weaver and Olson, 2006) and belief that reality is a social construct resulting in multiple realities. Epistemologically, there is an emphasis on empathetic understanding (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010; Saunders et al., 2009) and researchers will use subjective judgements to interpret their data. Interpretivist researchers refute the positivist search for objectivity and keeping distance between the researcher and those being studied, believing people's behaviour needs to be understood by the researcher 'sharing their frame of reference' (Cohen et al., 2018:17). Axiologically, research is value-laden (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015) and data is interpreted within the context of the researcher's own experience, knowledge and values, although an obligation is placed on 'honourably reporting' participants experiences and opinions (Wingrave, 2014:75).

An interpretivist paradigm is commonly found in fields of research dealing with the complexity of human experience, where understanding behaviour is key (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018). In contrast to the positivist paradigm, there is an emphasis on inductive reasoning where data is used to identify themes and from that seek meanings (Cohen et al., 2018). As interpretivist researchers tend to be concerned with understanding people's experiences, methods for collecting data tend to be qualitative and smaller in scale. In contrast to a positivist paradigm, there is an emphasis on seeking 'rich descriptions' (Remenyi et al., 1998) to build understanding and gradually augment a body of knowledge rather than a focus on proving facts and establishing universal laws (Cohen et al, 2018; Remenyi et al., 1998).

3.2.2   Positioning my research

My research explores practitioners' views on providing musical experiences for children under the age of 5. The study is small in scale (11 participants) and my aim is to better understand practitioners' behaviour and through this build knowledge to help strengthen music provision in our setting. Unlike positivism, I was not concerned with finding universal truths; the research related to just one social context (my nursery) and it was quite possible that my findings would not be replicated in a different setting. In line with interpretivism, I expected participants to present a number of different perspectives or 'realities' (Weaver and Olson, 2006). Ontologically therefore, the research sits within an interpretivist, not positivist, paradigm. Epistemologically, I used empathy to better understand practitioners' views (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). Following an interpretivist's outlook, it was not possible to be completely objective; previous knowledge and experience shaped how I interpreted the data and subjective judgements were used to make meaning from the results (Cohen et al., 2018). The axiology of the research was also interpretivist.   Both my ethical values and my background as a musician influenced the judgements and interpretations I made and I needed to remain aware of contrasting frames of reference (Ragland, 2006) as mine was likely to be different from the participants'.

3.3 Methods

As demonstrated above, my research clearly sits in an interpretivist paradigm with a strong inductive emphasis as summarised by Saunders et al. (2009:127). Consistent with this, the methods chosen to carry out the research were primarily qualitative however some quantitative data was collected to support and inform the qualitative data. Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) state that 'both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately within any research paradigm' and there has been increasing recognition that a mixed method approach such as this can strengthen research, generating better understanding (Weisner, 2005, 2011; Greene et al., 2011; Näslund, 2002). Indeed, there are some who believe this approach provides a robust way forward with the potential for it to be considered a new research paradigm (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Denscombe, 2008). While evaluating the merits of such claims is outwith the scope of this project, in line with Greene et al. (2011), Williams and Katz (2001) and Powell et al. (1996), I did believe that using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods would provide additional depth and richness to the data collected and its analysis.

The research was designed in two phases and two methods were chosen to collect data: questionnaires and a focus group. The reasons for choosing these methods are explained below. The first phase of the research involved all participants completing a paper questionnaire. Findings from the questionnaire were then used to inform the second phase of the research, a focus group involving some of the participants. The intention to connect the two methods in this way, meant the design met Greene et al.'s (2011:260) definition of a mixed method approach, in this case through 'development' where the results of one method were used to inform another.

3.3.1 The questionnaire

Questionnaires are widely used in a range of research situations. Where all respondents answer the same questions, they provide structured data, often quantitative in nature, in a standardised way that is comparatively straightforward to analyse (Cohen et al., 2018; Saunders et al., 2009). They are quick to complete and by varying the type of question used, can be flexible in the sort of data that is

collected. Cohen et al. (2018:278) suggest the fact questionnaires are completed individually (and sometimes anonymously) tends to result in more truthful responses.

I decided to use questionnaires in the first phase of my research because of its capacity to efficiently gather a range of quantitative and qualitative information which could be used to inform the second phase. As my research explored practitioner confidence, I also thought the relative anonymity of questionnaires would encourage more honest answers and safeguard the voice of less confident practitioners should this not emerge in the focus group. Questionnaires can be administered in different ways, for example on-line, by telephone or in writing (paper questionnaire). I opted to use a paper questionnaire so participants could answer the questions in their own time without having to use a computer (which I knew would deter some). The small scale of the project meant the responses from the questionnaires could easily be transferred to an electronic format for analysis.

3.3.2   The focus group

For the second phase, I wanted a qualitative method to probe deeper into some of the material elicited by the questionnaire. There are a number to choose from, including individual interviews, online forums and group interviews (Cohen et al., 2018). As with the questionnaire, knowing some participants would be ill at ease using a method reliant on technology, I avoided online forums, instead opting for a method that involved face to face discussion. I chose not to use individual interviews as I believed participants would feel more comfortable discussing views with their peers as this type of reflective practice is a common feature in our setting. I therefore decided to use a focus group: a flexible type of group interview where the discussion between the group members is key (Cohen et al., 2018). Consistent with Cohen et al. (2018), Freeman (2006) and Kitzinger (1994), I believed the group dynamic of a focus group could generate a synergy leading to data with depth and insights that would not necessarily have been stimulated in individual interviews.

There can be confusion about the term 'focus group' as it is used to mean different things (Barbour, 2005). This project uses the term in line with Boddy's (2005) understanding of a 'focus group discussion'. Participants came to the group to

discuss their views in an open way where the 'participatory discussion is maximised' (Boddy, 2005:251).   Acting as 'moderator', I supplied the topics for discussion, clarified views and helped keep the group focused, mediating in any disputes.

3.4 Implementing the project design

Participants for my practitioner enquiry were recruited from my workplace, a children's nursery and out of school club. As with any research proposal involving human beings, I had applied for and received ethical approval for the project from the University of Glasgow prior to collecting any data. At the time of the project, there were 22 members of staff at the nursery, 11 of whom performed the role of keyworker. I decided to focus on recruiting keyworker staff as they take main responsibility for planning activities in the playrooms and for recording children's development. They have most influence over what music is offered and most experience of assessing its impact.

I gave each of the keyworkers a Plain Language Statement (hereafter, PLS) explaining the purpose of the project, why they had been invited to take part and what their involvement would entail. Following the College of Social Sciences' ethical guidelines (University of Glasgow, online) the PLS explained their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any point without giving a reason. As employer of the potential participants, the PLS also addressed the potential power relationship that existed between me and the keyworkers and made clear that their decision to take part, or not, would in no way affect our working relationship or their future career prospects.

The PLS covered other ethical concerns such as confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were reassured that any information collected about them would be kept confidential and data would be kept in a locked filing cabinet with computer files available by password only. Names would be removed from transcripts and replaced with an ID number. In the interests of transparency (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007) and goodness (Tobin and Begley, 2004), I made it clear that while I would make every effort to maintain the participants' anonymity, it could not

be guaranteed given my association with the setting and the small scale of the project.   The PLS explained that the results of the research would be used to write the dissertation element of my Masters in Education and that any data would be destroyed after the project had been marked by members of the University School of Education. The PLS made participants aware that the project had been reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Forum and contact details were given for the School of Education Ethics Officer if any of the participants had concerns. The keyworkers were given a copy of the PLS to take away and read in their own time, along with a consent form to indicate whether or not they wanted to participate. A copy of these documents can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

All the keyworkers completed their consent forms, volunteering to participate. My sample group was therefore made up of 11 females between the ages of 20-55 years. For the first phase of the project, all participants were given a paper questionnaire to complete. While I needed to know who had completed the questionnaire in order to select participants for the focus group, this information was not shared with anyone else. The questionnaire was designed to include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative question types including open questions; list questions; category questions; and rating questions. Cohen et al. (2018) suggests this provides good coverage of the subject and the combination meant there was depth of information from the qualitative data whilst the quantitative data helped reveal possible patterns of association. Siebenaler (2006) and Kelly (1998) had found similar types of questionnaire beneficial in their research on primary teachers' musical understanding and confidence.

The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete and the introduction reiterated the terms of involvement made explicit on the consent form. While the subject matter was unlikely to cause distress per se, I made it clear participants need only answer the questions that they wished to and that I would be happy to meet with any of the participants at any point should they wish to discuss anything arising from the research. A copy of the questionnaire (including responses) can be found in Appendix 3.

Once the questionnaires had been completed, I collated the results and analysed them to see how the responses might inform the next phase of the research, the focus group. In line with the evolving and iterative nature of research in an interpretivist paradigm, I was then able to adjust my proposed focus group questions to probe deeper into these findings (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010; Wingrave, 2014).

While 11 participants completed the questionnaire only six were invited to take part in the focus group, following Kitzinger's (1994) belief that between four to eight people is the ideal group size to facilitate everyone's contribution. To encourage a wide-ranging discussion, the participants invited to the focus group encompassed practitioners showing different levels of musical confidence and working with different ages of children. The focus group was held at the nursery at the end of the working day. While there can be benefits to choosing a neutral setting (Barbour, 2005), I decided this was not necessary given the relatively benign nature of the topic. It also made attendance for the participants easier.

At the start of the group I restated the participants' terms of involvement. I explained that an auditory recording would be made of the focus group and that this would be transcribed with their names being replaced by an ID number to maintain confidentiality. They would be given the opportunity to review the transcription and the initial analysis of the data and clarify any points they had made as well as provide feedback. This practice supported a transparent and collaborative approach as advocated by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007). We then agreed the ground rules to ensure the smooth running of the focus group. The focus group lasted 45 minutes and a full transcript can be found in Appendix 4.

3.5 Data analysis

The results from the questionnaire were collated and an initial analysis carried out at the end of phase one in order to inform the focus group discussion. A range of question types had been used and an Excel spreadsheet created to collate the results of the list, category and rating questions as well as some of the responses to qualitative questions which lent themselves to this approach. As the data generated

from the questionnaire was small in scale and relatively simple, there was no need to use advanced statistical software, instead it was possible to identify potential patterns of association from the Excel spreadsheet (Saunders et al., 2009) which were then explored further in the focus group. Once the focus group had been completed a further analysis of the questionnaire results was undertaken so that the results from the two methods could be understood as a whole, seeking similarities, differences and further associations (Greene et al., 2011).

The data from the focus group and open ended questions in the questionnaire was analysed using thematic analysis as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). This offered a flexible approach, suitable for an interpretivist framework which still ensured consistency and rigour. Following transcription of the verbal data (in itself an aid to becoming conversant with the data, Braun and Clarke, 2006) initial codes were generated to identify interesting features. These codes were sorted into potential themes which were then reviewed and refined. Having mapped these themes out, a second review of the themes refined them further and the essence of each theme was defined. As described earlier, I then completed a further analysis combining the knowledge gained across all phases of the project to create a coherent 'story' from the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006:93).

Throughout the research project I continued to read around the subject and this learning alongside my prior knowledge and experience as both musician and early years practitioner underpinned and supported the above process. Axiologically, my interpretation of the data was inevitably influenced by the value I place on music and its role in children's development. While this is entirely consistent with an interpretative paradigm and part of the reason for choosing it, for my research to be 'transparent in its processes' (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007:205) I needed to ensure I was clear about the effect this had when writing up my findings.

3.6 Research limitations

All research has limitations and thought needs to be given to overcome or at least minimise these. Choosing an appropriate paradigm and research methods supports

a coherent project design (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) which in itself maximises the advantages of each method. In line with Weisner (2005) I would argue that using more than one method also helps mitigate against the limitations inherent in each method individually.

The questionnaire was designed with a mixture of closed and open questions as this protected against the possible limitations of using just one type (Cohen et al., 2018). One of the key disadvantages of questionnaires is the potentially low return rate. This was not an issue here, where I experienced a 100% return rate. Given the existing relationship between me and the participants this was not unexpected but does have other ethical implications, as discussed in the ethics section (3.7) below. The questionnaire was 'proof-read' by a member of staff which helped guard against misinterpretation of the questions and the later focus group also allowed any misunderstandings to be investigated further. Not being able to judge the truthfulness of responses can be a limitation of questionnaires, however, the fact that I work with the participants resulted in some awareness of how honest responses were and again, the focus group enabled any dubiety to be clarified.

In terms of the focus group, there is some debate over the merits of group members already knowing each other. Krueger (1994, cited in Freeman, 2006) warns against the impact existing relationships can have on the quality of the discussion whereas Kitzinger (1994) considers exchanges are more 'natural'. Smithson (2000) and Holloway and Wheeler (2010) highlight the issue of how one dominant member of the group can suppress other views. In order to mitigate these problems, I needed to remain aware of pre-existing group dynamics that might affect people's participation and in my role as moderator, support all members to feel comfortable contributing their views. Again, the use of mixed methods meant that the data from the questionnaires helped support the voices of less assertive participants to be captured. Another potential limitation of focus groups is that they can struggle to give breadth of information and the data they provide can be difficult to analyse given its diverse nature (Cohen et al., 2018). Once more the combination of questionnaires and focus groups supported data collection with a range of qualities and the questionnaires proved particularly useful in efficiently revealing associations that might not have emerged from a focus group alone (for example the association

between children's age and frequency of musical experiences explored in section 4.2.2).

While the use of mixed methods did much to strengthen understandings generated by the research Greene et al., (2011) highlight that mixing methods can have drawbacks. Researchers need to be aware that by mixing methods they may also be mixing philosophical values and beliefs. While this is clearly a danger, in this particular instance I believe that the two methods have both been used in a way that is consistent with the interpretivist paradigm. The gathering of quantitative data which is often associated with a positivist paradigm (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015; Saunders et al., 2009) was not done with a positivist mindset: on a large scale, generalising outcomes and finding universal truths. Instead quantitative data was gathered on an extremely small scale, its purpose simply to illuminate the particular context of this study, supporting more accurate interpretation of the findings and producing deeper understanding.

3.7 Ethics

Gaining ethical approval and putting in place ethical safeguards as described in section 3.4 meant I had satisfied the university in terms of compliance and in their overarching principle that research should 'do no harm'. From an axiological perspective, however, I felt it was important that I did more than avoid doing damage, I wanted to do good. As an example of practitioner enquiry, my project was in the tradition of doing research which would go on to impact practice (Dadds, online; Weaver and Olson, 2006; GTCS, online). Though small in scale, it connected with Fullan's concept that change should have a moral purpose (Fullan, 2001), in this case improving outcomes in music for practitioners and children and through the direct involvement of practitioners in my research, fostering our objective to embed a learning culture within our nursery (Setting's Improvement Plan, 2017-18). The fact that I was the employer of the practitioners, if anything, increased my sense of responsibility to deliver this outcome and to do this in a way that honoured Tobin and Begley's (2004) understanding of 'goodness' and 'trustworthiness'.

In the debate over how best to assure the quality of studies carried out within qualitative frameworks, trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), goodness (Tobin and Begley, 2004) and ethics (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007) have all been suggested as part of the answer. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007) identified five 'overriding 'ethical' guidelines for practitioner research' and it is by adopting these and ensuring they flow through my practitioner enquiry that I believe I can best govern quality and meet the project's moral purpose (Fullan, 2001). The guidelines are given below followed by an explanation of how they permeate my research.

1. That it should observe ethical protocols and processes
2. That it should be transparent in its processes
3. That it should be collaborative in its nature
4. That it should be transformative in its intent and action
5. That it should be able to justify itself to its community of practice
Taken from Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007:205-206)

The steps taken to ensure compliance with the School of Education's ethical guidelines (University of Glasgow, online) met the first guideline and how this was done has been explained in section 3.4. The second guideline relating to transparency I believe to be crucial when carrying out a research project where the participants are known to you; even more so, where a power relationship exists between you. It was very important that the practitioners who were invited to take part in the project clearly understood what was involved and that they felt under no obligation to participate because I was their employer. The PLS and the consent forms were key documents explaining this and this information was supported verbally at various points throughout the project. In addition, participants were given opportunities to clarify their views and revise points they had made during the research. This process demonstrated how their views were valued and supported the features of trustworthiness and authenticity inherent in Tobin and Begley's concept of 'goodness' (2004).

While I tried hard to ensure practitioners understood and believed that their participation was voluntary, I was aware that the 100% participation rate could be considered evidence that the impact of the power relationship between me and the participants was not entirely mitigated. While I acknowledge that is one possible interpretation, I believe Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) third, fourth and

fifth guidelines offer an alternative insight. Practitioners in early years are used to working collaboratively; it is a key component of the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC, 2015) and the SSSC's Codes of Practice (SSSC, 2016). Practitioners are used to reflecting on their practice as a group and motivated, skilled practitioners will want to identify improvements and innovations that positively impact their practice. Practitioner enquiry projects tap into this appetite (Campbell et al., 2004) and I think it is fair to argue that this 'transformative intent' is the foremost reason why all the practitioners chose to take part. In line with Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's guidelines (2007), it is my ethical responsibility to ensure that their collaboration does lead to transformative action and intent and that the practitioners who took part do feel the benefits will be worth the effort with the research justifying itself to its community of practice.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has explained how this project can be defined as practitioner enquiry. It has introduced the concept of paradigms and in comparing two contrasting paradigms, positivist and interpretivist, has demonstrated how this research sits within the latter. An outline of the project design describes which methods have been chosen and why and explores how some of the limitations of those methods have been moderated. The chapter covers how data has been collected and analysed and ethics have been examined both as a means of ensuring compliance and as a means of safeguarding 'methodological rigour' (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Adopting Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) five ethical guidelines has been identified as a way of ensuring this project not only avoids 'doing harm' but actively promotes doing 'good' by building understanding, collaboration and knowledge which will ultimately result in a stronger learning community and improved musical outcomes for our setting. The next chapter will now present the findings from the research.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

The previous chapter described the overall project design and the steps taken to gather data in an ethical and robust way, using a mixed method approach in an interpretivist paradigm. As outlined, the data was analysed at various points of the project to identify potential patterns of association as well as themes using Braun and Clarke's (2008) guidelines for thematic analysis. This chapter describes that analysis and the findings that materialised. To support 'methodological rigour' (Tobin and Begley, 2004) and avoid Braun and Clarke's (2006:80) criticism of themes simply 'emerging' from the data I aim to be transparent about that process, making clear connections between the data collected, its analysis and the findings.

4.1 Analysis

As explained in section 3.4 and in line with Greene et al. (2011), the first analysis was of the responses to the questionnaire in order to inform the subsequent focus group. A summary of this can be found in Appendix 5. While I had anticipated some of the associations that came out of the questionnaire responses, I did not find the strong association that I was expecting between practitioners' confidence and how often they offered musical experiences. Instead the data indicated an association between children's age and how often they offered experiences. By using analysis as an iterative process (Wingrave, 2014) and in line with an interpretivist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) it was possible to amend the proposed focus group questions to explore this association and seek a deeper understanding of what it might mean.

Following the focus group, all qualitative data was analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase process. This included data from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and from the transcription of the focus group. The initial coding generated over 60 codes which were sorted into potential themes. These themes were reviewed and refined resulting in the final thematic map shown in Figure 4-1. A copy of the questionnaire results, colour coded to show links to

themes can be found in Appendix 3 and a full transcription of the focus group, showing initial coding as well as links to themes can be found in Appendix 4.
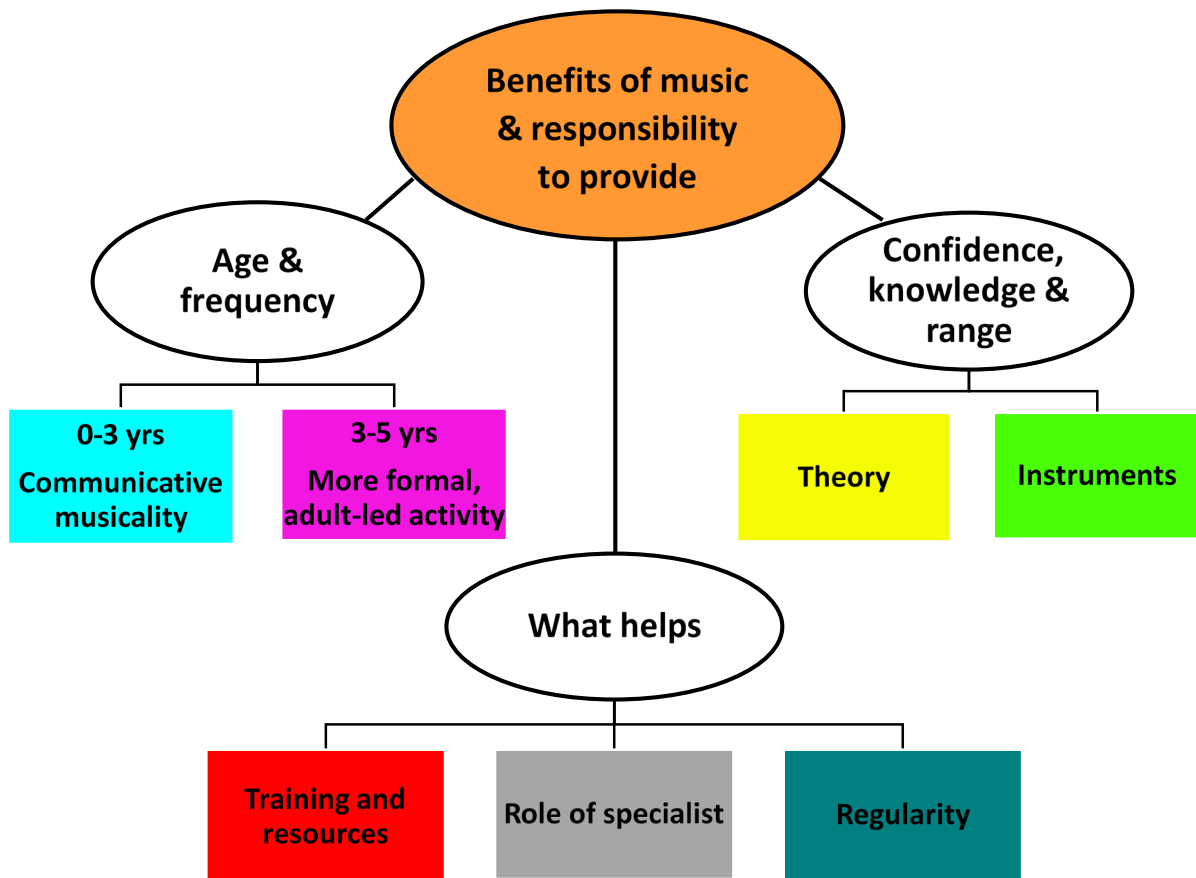
Figure 4-1   Final plan of themes

In line with Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) guideline advocating transparency (see section 3.7) focus group participants were given a copy of the transcription and a copy of the above plan, along with a brief summary of the initial analysis. They were asked to clarify and revise any points that they wished and to comment on my initial interpretation of the data. One minor amendment was made to the transcription by RP4, clarifying a point she had made about using music to give instructions. In all other matters, the participants felt their views had been accurately represented.

4.2 Findings

This section will now present the findings from the research using the themes identified in Figure 4-1 and using graphs to illustrate complimentary and supporting evidence from quantitative data from the questionnaire. The analysis indicated an overarching theme of participants recognising the positive outcomes of musical experiences and their resulting responsibility to provide them. This perspective permeated the data and provided the context within which participants perceived and discussed all other aspects of the research. The section below outlines this principle theme with sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 describing the three themes emanating from it.

4.2.1 The benefits of music and practitioners' responsibility to provide it

Throughout the research participants highlighted the benefits of music:

> *I think we all understand its benefits and how positive it can be…*
> RP5:FG694
>
> *Just because they [children] need it – they get things from music…*
> RP2: FG443

In the questionnaire participants were asked for examples of the learning intentions they were targeting when offering musical experiences. Their responses were numerous and varied and demonstrated an awareness of many of the benefits music could generate both intrinsically and extrinsically (Lee, 2012). The graph below summarises responses to Question 4 of the questionnaire, asking participants to give examples of the learning intentions they target when offering musical experiences.
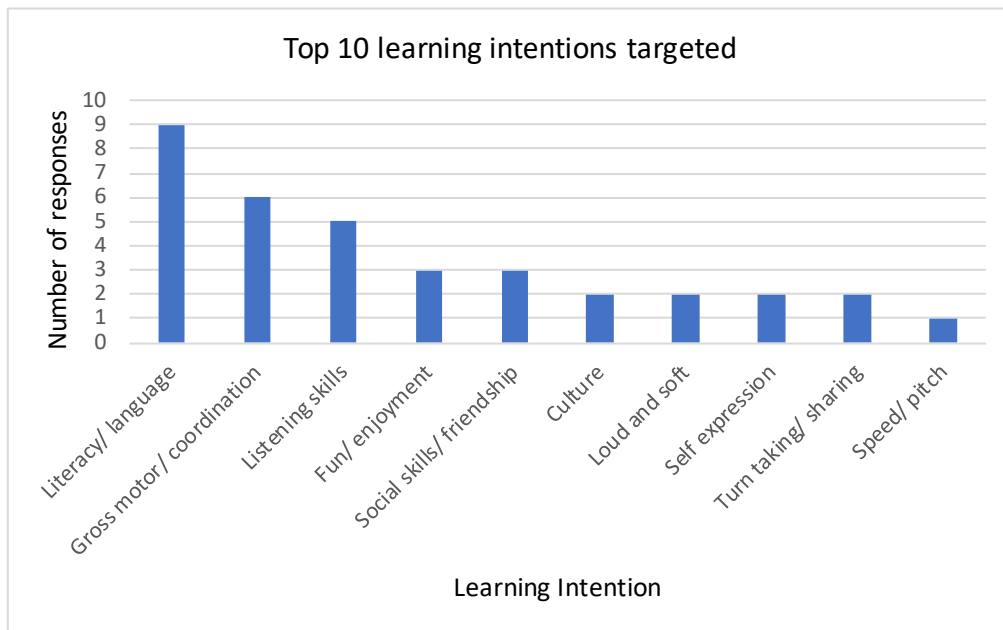
Figure 4-2 Graph showing top 10 learning intentions targeted by participants

Paralleling Lee's (2012) findings about research in early years music education, it was noticeable that participants tended to focus on how music could support other learning rather than learning inherent to music. For example, participants talked readily about music supporting language development but were far more reticent discussing pitch or rhythm. When this was raised in the focus group participants attributed this to a lack of musical knowledge:

> *I suppose it's cos we don't know. If you're not musical you don't know all this – the high notes, the low notes.*
> RP2: FG97

> *If you don't play an instrument that's not the stuff you can comfortably chat about - if you don't actually play an instrument, if you can't read music.*
> RP5: FG100

Later on in the focus group, one of the participants (RP4) talked about her experience working alongside music therapists in a children's hospital. The music therapists tended to explore musical concepts in a very experiential way, for example children encountered dynamics as a contrast between loud and soft music; tempo was experienced as a contrast between fast and slow.   As the focus group

40

progressed it was noticeable that participants started to reassess what they might be able to offer in terms of musical learning. Having initially rejected it as being outwith their area of expertise and put off by unfamiliar musical terms, some of the later comments in the focus group suggested growing recognition that many musical concepts were more straightforward than they had thought and well within their capabilities:

> *I suppose you don't really appreciate that that's how you can offer that, yeah.*
> RP5: FG363

> *The way that [RP4] was saying earlier about doing it in hospitals and things, that's not something we would have thought of – feeling the music, you know, the high and the low and you helping them to do a little shake or a loud shake, just things as simple as that – it doesn't need to be complicated.*
> RP2:FG527

This ties in with Young's (2009) view that practitioners are perfectly capable of providing musical experiences but deep seated, cultural understandings of music being an innate talent which only highly trained individuals can engage in, often create a mental and physical barrier.

While participants gave a wide range of scores when asked to indicate how confident and comfortable they were engaging in musical experiences, all members of the focus group believed they had a responsibility to provide them for children:

> *Me personally, I'm tone deaf but you can see they enjoy it so you just have to forget how you feel and do it for them.*
> RP1: FG452

> *It's your job and it's important you do the right thing by them*
> RP5:FG455

The consequence of this belief is discussed further in the section below exploring the relationship between age and frequency.

4.2.2 Children's age and the frequency of musical experiences

As mentioned in section 4.1, I anticipated a strong association between participants' confidence and how often they provided musical experiences: less confident participants would avoid music as per the negative cycle of confidence represented in Figure 1-2. Instead, the results from the questionnaire suggested a more complex picture. There did seem to be a weak association between confidence and frequency but there was still evidence of some less confident participants providing music on a daily basis, whilst more confident participants sometimes offered it only once a week.
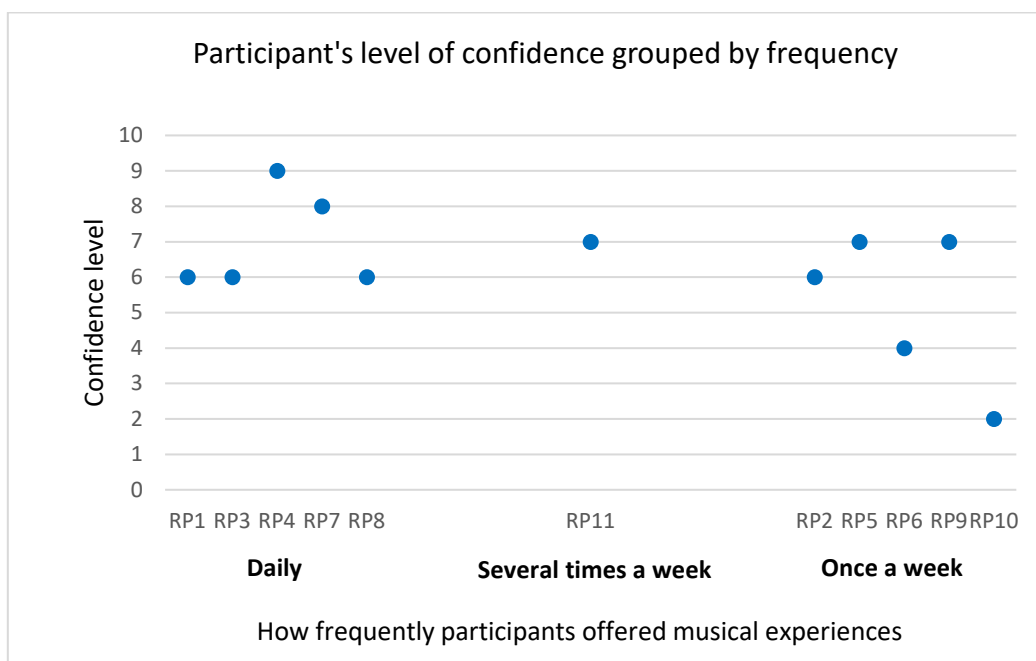
Figure 4-3 Graph showing participant's level of confidence grouped by frequency

This situation was much more marked when comparing how comfortable participants were singing in front of children and colleagues. Participants who marked themselves relatively low for comfort still provided it daily whilst a number of participants, very comfortable with singing, offered it once a week
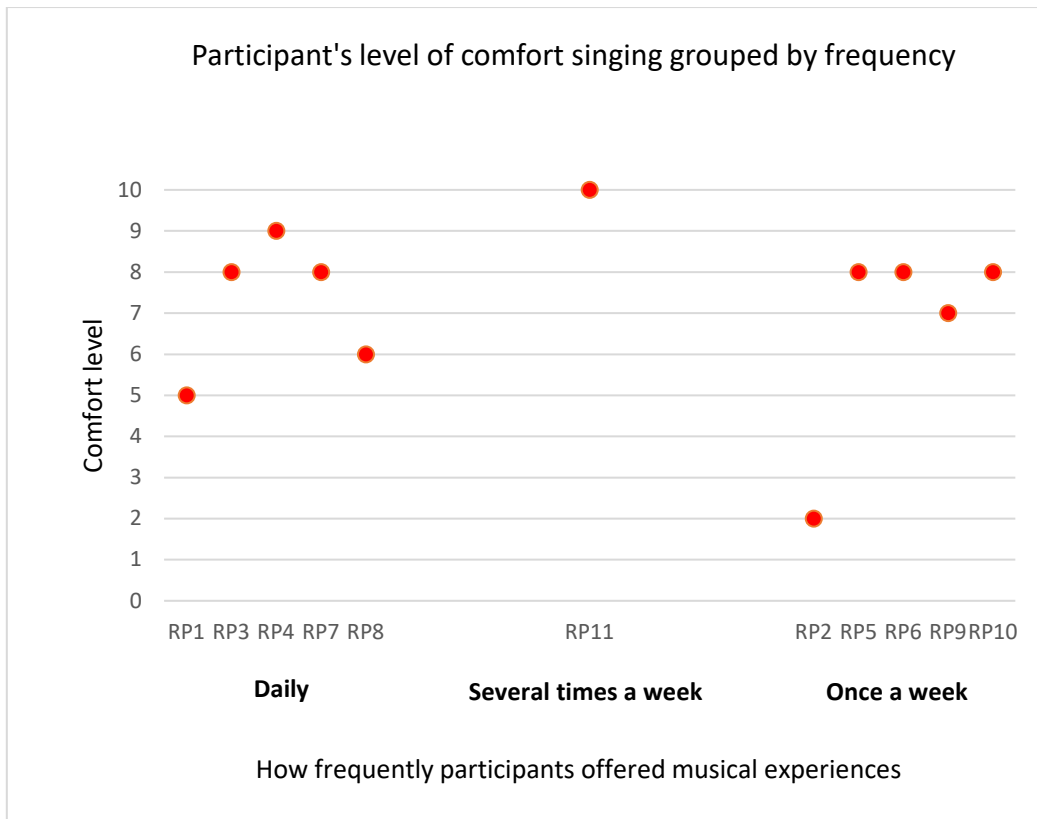
Figure 4-4 Participant's level of comfort singing grouped by frequency

By contrast, a strong association was indicated between children's age and frequency, as shown below. The majority of participants working with 0-3 year olds offered music daily, whilst those working with 3-5 year olds offered it once a week.
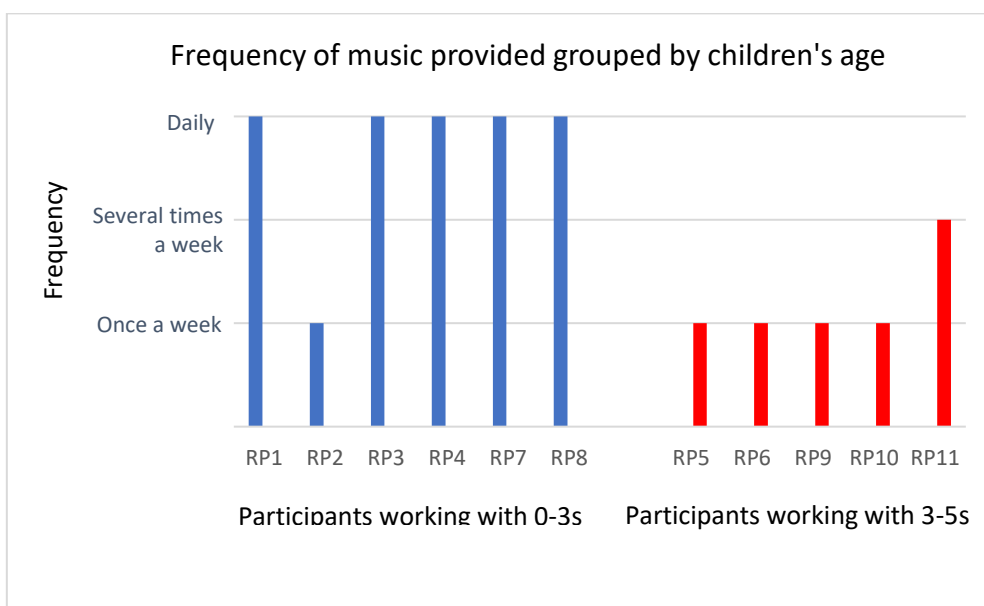
Figure 4-5 Frequency of music provided grouped by children's age

The focus group enabled these potential associations to be explored further. The ensuing discussion presented noticeable differences in the way participants talked about and used music with 0-3 year olds compared to those working with 3-5 year olds. Participants working with 0-3 year olds spoke about non-verbal communication; instinct; and the relationship between music and mood. This was reflected in the questionnaire responses too. They felt music was something young children needed on a daily basis as opposed to a learning experience that ought to be provided.

> *There's a lot of non-verbal communication in our room so I think in that respect we use it a lot…*
> RP2:FG443
>
> *Music to a very young baby is instinctively used to soothe, calm and express love and joy and is used to engage and interact with them.*
> RP11:Q4
>
> *Music, I always think, you don't just listen, you feel it, you can literally feel it…*
> RP4:FG193

The ethos they described resonated strongly with the concept of communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009) outlined in section 2.1.2. Relationships were built up with children through music. It was used as a means to 'converse' with children (often non-verbally), influence emotion and develop a shared understanding of themselves and the world around them.

By contrast, the nature of musical experiences seemed to change as children got older. Music was seen as a more structured, organised experience, led by adults. It was a distinct activity with a more direct focus on learning outcomes rather than an experience woven through the fabric of the day.

> *…it's just not quite the same dynamic. So it has to be, right let's sit down and we'll sing now.*
> RP5:FG238
>
> *…what would be important for me would be understanding the theory … what then would be the outcome for the children and what that's offering them from a cognitive and a learning benefit.*
> RP5:FG115

One of the participants, RP5 had worked with children of all ages and her comment suggested that her practice had changed according to the age of the children:

> *It's funny, we were talking about it earlier…in the babyroom, I would sing all the time… and it would be like a distraction, if they were getting a little bit sad or a little bit grumpy – you would just do it – three or four times a day, you would burst into song… it happens naturally, you don't really think about it.*
> RP5:FG222

Intuitively, she had adopted a 'communicative musicality' (ibid.) ethos when working with young children which had disappeared when she moved to work with older children. When she and RP6 (who also works with 3-5 year olds) were asked about this, they both suggested children's increasing language skills were a key reason for this change with words taking the place of the earlier 'natural' use of song and musical communication.

> *They're just not expecting you to do that because there's quite a lot of conversation going on.*
> RP6:FG235

Although not prominent, there were also a few comments suggesting a growing sense of self-consciousness working with older children. Participants working with 0-3 year olds provided music without any sense of being 'critiqued' by children but this view was not necessarily shared by those working with older children:

> RP6:   *Cos they don't know good singers or bad singers*
> RP2:   *Cos they don't judge you do they?*
> RP6:   *No, not at that age*
> RP5 (working with 3-5's):   *Well I don't know…*
> FG292
>
> *We've not got that level of confidence that he [music specialist] has and they [the children aged 3-5] know it as well, they suss that out.*
> RP6:FG470

It felt as though the changing ethos, the increased focus on language and learning outcomes, the more critical audience, all increased the demands on practitioners working with older children and heightened the pressure to make musical experiences successful. In these circumstances avoiding music must seem attractive to less confident practitioners, especially if musical experiences are not a regular

habit, embedded in the culture of the setting. As Hennessy (2017) found in schools, music can become the preserve of the specialist and one class teachers do not teach.

4.2.3 Participant's confidence, knowledge and the range and content of musical experiences

Throughout the questionnaire responses and the focus group, participants spoke about wanting to understand the theory behind the music and being concerned about 'not doing it right'. Lack of musical knowledge tended to lead to low confidence which in turn resulted in practitioners sticking to the things they knew and felt comfortable with, notably songs and rhymes. While the relationship between confidence and frequency (explored above) appeared quite complex, the one between confidence and range of musical experiences seemed more straightforward, as illustrated by the statements below:

> *I think we probably know that there's like a theory and that there's a really positive outcome…but there would be a worry that you wouldn't be doing it correctly…*
> RP5:FG48

> *It is hard not to be stuck 'in your ways' and offer 'same' experiences and not venture out of your comfort zone and try newer experiences.*
> RP11:Q7

As identified by Wilson et al. (2008) it was lack of technical knowledge that most concerned practitioners. Participants felt they had a role to play in building children's musical knowledge but seemed uncertain how best to do this, especially beyond a 'basic' level:

> *I am happy and confident to offer basic musical experiences but do not feel qualified to offer experiences that may support and enhance children's development.*
> RP5:Q5

> RP1:   *…it's how you can put it into place, how you can do something productive with it.*
> RP2:   *Aha*
> RP1:   *It just seems to be more that they enjoy making noise.*

FG135

This issue of music turning into noise recurred throughout the data and was particularly associated with using instruments. Of all the musical experiences discussed, using instruments (particularly pitched instruments such as xylophones) was the one participants avoided, partly to do with noise levels but largely due to a perceived lack of knowledge and therefore confidence. In their study Holden and Button (2008) also found a preference for singing experiences amongst primary teachers as opposed to others, including use of instruments.

> *What I am not so confident in is music with instruments and generally choose not to do them.*
> RP11:Q5
>
> *And if you've got instruments and you've got 18 kids, you're not going to get the instruments out of the cupboard cos it's bedlam. You don't know what you're doing, you don't know how best to do it, you've just got 18 kids going mayhem with the instruments …*
> RP6:FG241

In line with Holden and Button (2006) and Wilson et al. (2008) participants believed that increasing their knowledge (and through that, their confidence) would help manage these situations better and improve outcomes for children:

> *I think what we've got in our heads, that you're going to bring it [the instruments] out and it's just going to be 'wah'. It's going to be painful and loud. But that again is just a lack of experience and knowledge…*
> RP6:FG686
>
> *If you're not confident the children won't put their all into it. If they think, oh she feels a bit like she doesn't know what she's doing, you'll lose the kids interest.*
> RP4:FG464

In the focus group participants went on to discuss instruments that they had come across that were quieter and more sensory in nature. There was recognition that careful selection of the type of instruments offered could have a positive impact, reducing the likelihood of music escalating into 'noise' and enabling more open ended musical experiences where participants did not feel they had to lead the activity in order to control the volume level.

4.2.4 What helps?

All participants showed some level of keenness to develop their musical knowledge and through this their confidence in providing musical experiences.

> *I would like to offer more experiences by gaining confidence in looking for different ideas and trying out things within daily routines.*
> RP3:Q7

> *My knowledge of providing a variety of different musical experiences to the children is limited. I would be interested to learn more ways I could improve this.*
> RP8:Q7

Participants identified a range of ways this could be achieved which broadly fell into three categories: training and resources; the role of the specialist; and increasing the regularity of musical experiences.

Participants felt that training courses would help participants know 'the right way to go about it' (RP5:FG683). It would improve their understanding of the theory underpinning musical experiences, increase the scope of what they could offer and build confidence to try new things. This certainly aligns with evidence from studies such as Siebenaler's (2006) and Biasutti et al.'s (2014) however it should be noted that the successful studies these articles describe were intensive and delivered over a period of weeks if not months. They were not the typical one-off twilight sessions generally offered to early years practitioners as continuing professional development (hereafter, CPD).

Alongside this, participants wanted to expand the range of musical resources they had to include softer, more sensory instruments with a focus on instruments children could play themselves. Participants also discussed resources for listening to music, including CD's of a range of different musical genres and a CD player that children could operate independently. This increased focus on child-initiated music is strongly endorsed by Young (2009) and one that is not common in the nursery at the moment.

During the focus group, a number of participants spoke eagerly about initiatives where an outside music specialist had come into the nursery or next door primary school to provide musical experiences. Participants were positive about the projects and enthusiastic about the benefits for children, however there was ambiguity about the benefits for practitioners and teachers. This was explored further and while some participants suggested having an 'outsider' coming in led to higher levels of engagement from the children, others felt it was off-putting, particularly if specialists played a range of instruments and provided experiences they were unable to emulate. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) also recognise this issue and the danger that it perpetuates an understanding of music as a 'special' subject that generalist teachers are ill-equipped to provide.

Throughout the focus group participants highlighted the importance of music becoming a 'habit'. Both children and staff needed to engage in musical activities regularly to build confidence and ability and staff felt that for children, this confidence could transfer to other performance activities such as drama or talking in front of a large group.

> *If that was a regular thing that happened, they [3-5 year olds] did singing and taking part was just something that happened every day then they would probably feel more confident.*
> RP5:FG286

A number of staff spoke about feeling comfortable singing and doing music alongside their playroom colleagues but were far less confident in front of others. Again, regularity seemed to support confidence and competence:

> *I think it needs to be regular with the same staff so everybody knows what they're doing.*
> RP4:FG109

> *I feel I am comfortable singing in front of the children and with the staff that work in the same room as me but do not feel as confident around other staff.*
> RP8:Q6

The recognition of the importance of regularity resonates strongly with Henessy's (2017) emphasis on development through experience and Young (2009) and Durrant

and Welch's (1995) belief that musical ability can be acquired through practice.   It would require a change of culture as well as practice within our setting

In conclusion, the findings indicate participants value music and are keen to develop their knowledge and through that, their confidence in providing musical experiences. Their views, interpreted through my knowledge and values and informed by literature, have led to the identification of a number of ways that this could be done. These are discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

As an example of practitioner enquiry this study's ultimate aim is to improve practice (Campbell et al., 2004). The research process has given me a far better understanding of practitioners' views on providing musical experiences to children under 5 but I need to be mindful of the fact that the study is small in scale and related to just one setting. By adopting an interpretative paradigm, I was seeking 'rich descriptions' (Remenyi et al., 1998) not universal truths and my knowledge and experience as someone who has studied music and worked as a music 'specialist' will have shaped how I have interpreted the data and relevant research and literature. In keeping with an interpretative paradigm, the main thrust of my recommendations, will therefore relate to me, my staff and my setting.

5.1 The setting

Given my background in music it is important I recognise my frame of reference is different to the participants' (Ragland, 2006). I value music highly and strongly believe in the benefits it brings to children's learning and development but there is no reason to expect participants to share this perspective. I am fortunate to have discovered, through the data, that participants do share these values, although perhaps more cautiously. There is already an appetite within the staff team to improve music provision. The research process has not only fostered that appetite, it has reframed it as a joint venture, one that the participants and I can take forward together, supporting our objective to embed a learning culture within our nursery (Setting's Improvement Plan, 2017-18); in line with benchmark 19 of the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC, 2015); and consistent with Fullan's (2001) concept of moral purpose and knowledge building (see section 3.7).

Participants recognised the need to build musical knowledge and through this increase confidence. They also identified the importance of regularity; music needs to become a 'habit', embedded in the culture of the nursery if confidence is to be increased and learning benefits achieved. If this research is to meet Groundwater-

Smith and Mockler's (2007) guidelines of research being collaborative in nature and transformative in its intent and action (see section 3.7), it is clear that attending a 'wee course' (RP5:FG685) is not going to be sufficient. Indeed, prior experience of sending two practitioners on a one-day music course has shown that this sort of intervention does not lead to the type of root and branch change needed. Far more effective would be an intensive, long term initiative as advocated by Siebenaler (2006) and Biasutti et al. (2014) where practitioners are supported 'in-class' by a music specialist as envisaged by Holden and Button (2006). I could adopt the role of 'music specialist'.

Within such an initiative, the data collected through the focus group and questionnaire, synthesised with knowledge from relevant research and literature already give some indication of the content that would be beneficial and the culture needed to underpin it. These are summarised below and could be developed collaboratively with staff to foster commitment and effectiveness as advocated by Holden and Button (2006).

Changes to culture

- Support the creation of a culture where music is seen as 'learnable' and 'teachable' (Young, 2009:13) and both children and practitioners can build new skills. Avoid perpetuating the negative cycle outlined in Figure 1-2,
- In line with Durrant and Welch (1995:14) and the concept of communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009) develop an ethos where music is seen as 'normal human behaviour' in a world where everyone has an innate musicality.
- Foster a culture which views music as a valued 'habit' regularly enjoyed by children of all ages and where the profound nature of musical interactions outlined in communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009) extends to older children.
- Increase confidence and competence amongst practitioners so they view music initiatives offered by music specialists as complimentary to what they offer avoiding Seddon and Biasutti's (2008) concern that they lead to negative comparisons of musical skills.

Changes to content of musical experiences

- Participants want a better understanding of the theory behind music. In line with benchmark 23 of the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC, 2015), I can support that learning and professional development, building knowledge of both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of music and suggesting practical ways to deliver these benefits.

- Participants want to expand musical resources, particularly in relation to developing opportunities for child-initiated music as advocated by Young (2009). I can use my knowledge and experience to identify resources and instruments that will support this goal, creating a music-rich environment (Pound and Harrison, 2003) but one that is manageable for practitioners and where music does not become 'noise'.

- Support needs to be hands-on as well as theoretical. By regularly working alongside practitioners my musical knowledge and experiences can be shared with theirs in a mutually beneficial way. Practitioners already recognise the benefits inherent in music and their responsibility to provide them. Together we can build an understanding of 'what works' and move beyond 'basics' in a collegiate approach rooted in learning and moral commitment as endorsed by Sergiovanni (2001).

While the parameters of this study, have not enabled a focus on parents the above findings do have significance for them. The positive outcomes for children when staff build confidence and knowledge in music are equally applicable to parents. Music already provides an easy and natural way of sharing learning: parents often ask staff for the words of songs that their child has come home singing; children often sing or ask for music they enjoy at home. This could be further enhanced through song sheets, newsletters containing ideas for musical activities, stay and play music sessions and early years music workshops for parents and their children. Developing initiatives such as these would support partnership working and family learning, a key theme permeating early years policy documents including Pre-birth to Three guidance (LTS, 2010), CFE (Education Scotland, online e), How Good is Our

Early Learning and Childcare (Education Scotland, 2016b) and benchmarks 3 and 20 of the Standard for Childhood Practice (SSSC, 2015). If, over the course of time, the changes we introduce prove successful in our setting, there is also the potential to share good practice with other nurseries and playgroups through local networks. All of this will help support realisation of Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2007) final guideline, that research should be able to justify itself to its community of practice.

5.2 The bigger picture

As recognised in the introduction, my research has primarily been concerned with building knowledge and understanding related to my setting. Whilst being careful not to overstep the boundaries of practitioner enquiry set in an interpretative, the findings do present some insights which might usefully be considered in a wider context. These are presented below.

5.2.1 The role of music in education

As outlined in Chapter 2: there is growing evidence of the benefits music can have on children's development alongside a major shift in understanding of the musical competence of children 0-3 years (Young, 2016) represented in the concept of communicative musicality (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009). Sadly, there is no evidence of this enriched understanding of music in any of the key policy documents or curricula affecting early years education in Scotland. Indeed, as I argued earlier, Education Scotland's recent move to prioritise literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (Education Scotland, 2016a) threatens to marginalise music even further. Both the findings from this research and from related studies highlight a widespread lack of musical confidence amongst teachers and practitioners. The low value and presence accorded music in policy documents combined with low confidence in delivering music experiences threatens to prevent children being able to benefit from the many advantages music can engender.

In their review of the music sector (EKOS, 2014:129) Creative Scotland call for a thorough review of music education with a 'refreshed approach' and a new national strategy to guide funding and development. Following a series of research workshops with music educators, researchers and learners, the Manifesto for Music Education in Scotland calls for similar comprehensive reform (Brennan et al., 2017). Given the knowledge I have accrued though this practitioner enquiry, I can only echo that sentiment.

5.2.2 Building links between research and practice

The last twenty years have seen increasing interest in the role music can play in child development, however the resulting research can be wide ranging and fragmented and in terms of music education, exhibit a 'gap' between research and practice (Young, 2016). There are limited studies on the development of teaching practice within early years music (ibid.) particularly within a Scottish context (Wilson et al., 2008). On a global scale, Young (2016) identifies a lack of research across countries into the policy context for music education and in England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation (2014) raise concerns about the lack of a consistent understanding of the purpose of music education. Given the concerns raised in 5.2.1 regarding the role of music in education, these are gaps that need to be filled and a more coherent and accessible approach to research in early years music education encouraged.

In terms of this research study, while the GTCS champion practitioner enquiry (GTCS, online) it is unclear what systems they have in place to scrutinise or make use of the valuable information thus generated. For those in the private and voluntary sector, who often struggle to access the same supports and CPD opportunities as those in the public sector, this raises a concern that they may become increasingly isolated and distanced from innovative learning in education.

5.2.3 Qualifications for teachers and early years practitioners

Studies repeatedly show primary teachers struggling to teach music effectively on the small amount of training allocated to music within initial teacher training (Brennan et al., 2017; Wilson et al., 2008; Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2014). While it was

difficult to find any comparable research for early years practitioners, my experience having just completed an SVQ3 is that it contained no music at all. This is one of the key qualifications recognised by the SSSC for early years practitioners. If Scotland is to optimise the benefits of music in children's education and support confidence and competence in teachers and practitioners as promoted by Young (2009) and Durrant and Welch (1995), music has to form an integral part of qualifications with sufficient time and expertise devoted to it. With the increased provision of 'free' early and learning childcare due in Scotland by 2020 and an estimated 11,000 additional early years workers required to deliver this service (Scottish Government, online), the need for 'fit for purpose' qualifications has never been more crucial.

5.3 Conclusion

As someone passionate about music and the value it can add to everybody's lives but especially children's, I feel very mixed emotions about the current situation. I am excited and fascinated by the new discoveries research is making into the power of music to do good; to aid communication; support learning; and enrich lives. I am frustrated and disheartened by the failure of Scottish education to recognise this potential and create systems to harness this power in a consistent and coherent way. Perhaps part of the beauty of undertaking practitioner enquiry research is that ultimately it is about improving practice in my own setting, not changing the world. That undoubtedly is achievable, particularly given the enthusiasm and commitment of my staff team.

Me: Do you think there is still a role for you as practitioners doing it [music] though?

Strong general agreement

"Yes", "Definitely", "Definitely"

FG78

I like to participate even thought I don't have a great singing voice

RP10:Q6

Music ignites all areas of development

RP11:Q4

Oh yes, absolutely...all of that stuff is without doubt beneficial and has to happen.

RP5:FG716

...you can see their faces light up

RP1:FG393

There are no barriers that can't be rectified

RP11:Q8

Chapter 6:   References

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Appendix 1: Plain language statement

University *of* Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

School of Education

Plain Language Statement

Study title:
Practitioners' views on providing musical experiences for children under the age of 5
Researcher:
Caroline Dunmur   Email: Tel:
Supervisor: Stephen Boyle
Research undertaken as part of a Masters in Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

Music is an important part of children's learning and research shows the role it can play helping brain development and communication. While practitioners are often aware of the benefits music can bring, there can be barriers to providing musical experiences particularly if practitioners lack confidence in this area.

This study is being carried out for my Masters in Education dissertation. It will explore what musical experiences are offered in our nursery and how practitioners feel about the experiences they provide. The aim is to build a better understanding of what kind of music is offered, what the barriers can be to providing high quality music and how these can be overcome.

Why have I been chosen?

The project will take place at our nursery and all practitioners who are keyworkers will be invited to take part. This is because keyworkers take main responsibility for the experiences

offered to children and assessing their effect. This means 11 keyworkers will be invited to take part.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If you decide not to take part this will not affect our working relationship or your future career prospects at the nursery.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part then you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire taking about 20 minutes. The questionnaire will ask about the type of music you offer and how you feel about providing music to children at nursery.

After the questionnaire a smaller group of four-six participants will be invited to a focus group where we will talk about the subject in more detail. Participants for the focus group will be chosen to include people with different levels of confidence in providing music at nursery. The focus group will last 1-1½ hours.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will be identified by an ID number and any information about you will have your name and address removed so you cannot be recognised from it.

I will make every effort to maintain anonymity and will not name the nursery or the participants in the results. I cannot guarantee anonymity however because of my involvement with the setting and the small scale of the project.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of

wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact

relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be used to write my dissertation for my Masters in Education. This will be marked by members of the University School of Education. Data from the project will be destroyed after the project has been marked.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Forum

Contact for Further Information

Caroline Dunmur – contact details given at the start of this form

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the School of Education Ethics Officer Dr Kara Makara Fuller   email: education-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Consent form

![University of Glasgow logo] College of Social Sciences

School of Education

Consent Form

Title of Project: Practitioners' views on providing musical experiences for children under the age of 5

Name of Researcher: Caroline Dunmur   Supervisor: Stephen Boyle

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded. (I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.)

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

   I agree to take part in this research study   ☐

   I do not agree to take part in this research study   ☐

Name of Participant……………………….. Signature…………………. Date…………..

Name of Researcher……………………… Signature…………………. Date…………..

Appendix 3: Questionnaire with responses

Research participants' names have been replaced by RP and a number. The same code is used in the transcription of the focus group and in the presentation of the research findings.

Responses to qualitative questions have been colour coded to show how practitioners' views relate to the themes identified in the final plan found in Figure 4-1

University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

School of Education

Questionnaire

Study title:

Practitioners' views on providing musical experiences for children under the age of 5

Please consider your normal practice at nursery and answer the questions below as accurately as possible. If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, leave them blank. If any questions are not clear or you have any other queries about your participation, then please let me know.

Q.1 What age children do you normally work with?

☐ 0-2 years   ☐ 2-3 years   ☐ 3-5 years

RP8, RP7, RP1, RP2   RP4, RP3, RP10   RP10, RP5, RP11, RP6, RP9

Q.2 How often do you offer musical experiences to children at nursery?

☐ Daily   ☐ Several times a week ☐ Once a week   ☐ Twice
a month or less

RP4, RP8, RP3, RP7, RP1   RP11   RP10, RP5, RP6, RP9, RP2

Q.3 What type of musical experiences do you normally offer? (tick all that apply)

☐ Spoken rhymes

RP5 RP11 RP6 RP8 RP3 RP7 RP1 RP2 RP7 RP1 RP2

☐ Songs / sung nursery rhymes

RP4 RP10 RP5 RP11 RP6 RP8 RP3 RP9

☐ Action songs

(e.g. Wheels on the bus/ Ring a roses)

RP4 RP10 RP5 RP11 RP6 RP8 RP3 RP9 RP7 RP1 RP2

☐ Music combined with another activity

(e.g. sung register/ music as part of a drama)

RP4 RP10 RP5 RP11 RP3

☐ Music and movement

(e.g. Sticky Kids)

RP4 RP10 RP5 RP11 RP6 RP8 RP3

☐ Music supported by video clips

(e.g. singing along to clips on iPad)

RP4 RP5 RP8 RP3 NS

☐ Music with percussion instruments

(e.g. drums and shakers)

RP4 RP5 RP3 RP7 RP1 RP2

☐ Music with tuned instruments

(e.g. pitched bells)

RP3

☐ Listening to music

(i.e. as a focused activity, not background music)

RP4 RP11 RP6 RP3 RP2

☐ Talking about music/ sounds

(e.g. fast/ slow music; high/ low notes)

RP4 RP3

☐ Music for relaxation/ going to sleep

RP4 RP10 RP5 RP11 RP8 RP3 RP9 RP7 RP1 RP2

☐ Music opportunities offered in freeplay

RP11 RP8 RP3 RP7 RP1 RP2

☐ Other – please give details

RP4   I use music as a distraction technique for behaviours or encouraging children to eat, get nappy changed etc

Q.4 When you offer children musical experiences, can you give examples of the learning intentions you are targeting?

RP4   Listening skills; Turn taking; Speed / ascents/ descents; Fun; Play opportunities; Friendship building; Confidence Building; Speech and Language Development; Teaching rhythms, patience, hypothesis

RP10   Children having enjoyment using instruments; Children listening to musical actions and following them through; Learn through repetition

RP5   When offering spoken rhymes, songs, sung nursery rhymes and action songs my intention is to support and develop literacy skills. Other musical experience ie using percussion instruments, bells etc are generally used within a theme Christmas, Burns, Chinese New Year and playing along to favourite songs. The learning intentions then would be to offer breadth and depth to topic work and quite often follow children's interests.

RP11   As a practitioner in any room on a daily basis we aim to:

By providing musical experiences to a very young child can accelerate brain development particularly in areas of language acquisition and reading skills. Music to a very young baby instinctively used to soothe, calm and express love and joy and is used to engage and interact with them. As a child develops there is many benefits of musical education and exposure. Music ignites all areas of child development and skills for school readiness e.g. intellectual development, social and emotional, motor, language and overall literacy. It helps the mind and body work together. Exposing children to music helps them learn the sounds and meanings of words. Dancing to music helps children build motor skills while allowing them to practice self expression. For children and adults music helps strengthen memory skills. Singing and music plays an important role in our culture and daily practice. It is present in many aspects of our lives e.g. in television, theatre, movies, worship, celebrations, holiday etc. At home and nursery we want to provide it as part of our daily practice and culture – a natural part of our everyday experiences and development.

RP6   Songs and rhymes help children develop language and literacy skills. They also help them to learn the sounds and meaning of words. Dancing to music helps children develop gross motor skills, coordination and balance and allows opportunities for self expression.

RP8   Learning to share different instruments; Exploring that music and instruments have different noises and can be quiet or loud; Supporting their communication development and language

RP3   Enhance listening skills; Develop social skills; Encourage use of words (learn sounds and meaning); Dancing – build on gross motor

RP9   I want it to be a fun, learning experience; I want them to enjoy singing and dancing with their peer group to develop their friendships; I want to see the children copying actions to keep in time with the music; I want them to develop their literacy skills by using rhyme and repetition

RP7   Developing language skills; Developing listening skills

RP1   Hope the children start to learn about different sounds and how to make sound; Early movement starts to develop

RP2   My intentions are to provide children with a knowledge of music – to enable them to improve their language development by communicating verbally and non-verbally. Hearing and playing music/ instruments can aid children with their listening and movement skills.

Q.5 On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you providing musical experiences?

(Where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident)

Why have you given yourself that score?

RP4 **9** - I can get embarrassed in front of certain people

RP10 **2** - Don't have a 'musical' ear

RP5 **7** - I am happy and confident to offer basic musical experiences but do not feel qualitied to offer experience that may support and enhance children's development

RP11 **7** - I am pretty confident in musical related experiences of rhymes/ action songs/ music and movement/ music for relaxation/ music combined with another activity. What I am not so confident in is music with instruments and generally choose not to do them.

RP6 **4** – I am confident in the delivery of songs and rhymes but I am not confident in musical instrument sessions which usually end up with children banging and bashing the instruments loudly

RP8 **6** – I feel confident in providing some musical experiences but feel I could learn and develop more

RP3 **6** – I need to be more comfortable using resources and more confident with unfamiliar staff

RP9 **7** – I am confident offering musical experience through songs and nursery rhymes and can sing along with the children. I don't have a great amount of knowledge in how to enhance their play and literacy through song, therefore only giving a 7 out of 10

RP7 **8** – In the babyroom I am more than happy to sing a song and get some bells or drums to play with. I cannot play a musical instrument

RP1 **6** – I feel that I have enough knowledge to provide basic songs/ rhymes but would like to have the confidence to provide further/ new experiences in the playroom

RP2 **6** – I feel fairly confident providing musical experiences to the children but am aware there can be more than providing children with some musical instruments, dancing, putting music on etc

Q.6 On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you singing in front of children and colleagues?

(Where 1 is not at all comfortable and 10 is extremely comfortable)

Why have you given yourself that score?

RP4 **9** - I can get embarrassed in front of certain people

RP10 **8** - I like to participate even though I don't have great signing voice

RP5 **8** - Although I do not believe I am a wonderful singer I am very comfortable singing at work. Perhaps if someone told me I was awful that might ruin my confidence?!

RP11 **10** - Because I do not have a problem with this and am perfectly at ease with children and staff

RP6 **8** – Whilst I will never be a singer I don't think my singing voice is too bad. I know I can sing in tune

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RP8   **6** - I feel I am comfortable singing in front of the children and with staff that work in the same room as me but do not feel as confident around other staff

RP3   **8** - I really enjoy singing in front of the children in my room and I feel I can do good music activities with particular colleagues

RP9   **7** - I would never sing in front of a crowd e.g. karaoke! But I am happy to sing along with the children and can hold a tune (just!). Singing with my own children when they were young has helped, especially as I know a lot of the songs

RP7   **8** - Children no problem, colleagues as long as they join in

RP1   **5** – Feel more comfortable singing in front of the babies and staff who work in the babyroon rather than others

RP2   **2** – I do not feel confident singing and fell very self-conscious if I do

On a scale of 1 to 10, how happy are you with the musical experiences you offer children?

(Where 1 is not at all happy and 10 is extremely happy)

How could that score be increased?

RP4   **7.5** - Not everyone enjoys music so it's about finding the correct balance

RP10   **7** - What I offer the children is within my capabilities

RP5   **6** - I would be open to increasing my knowledge and understanding of the benefits of music in the early years setting. I do believe what I offer at the moment is positive but needs development

RP11   **7** – By offering a wider selection of musical experiences. It is hard not to be stuck "in your ways" and offer 'same' experiences and not venture out of your comfort zone and try newer experiences.

RP6   **3** – I think the children should have more musical experience especially with instruments. Songs and rhymes should be a daily experience at register/ story time

RP8   **5** – Learning more ways to explore and provide different music experiences

RP3   **7** – I would like to offer more experiences by gaining confidence in looking for different ideas and trying out things within daily routine

RP9   **5** – I think we should offer more musical experiences to the children, using a variety of instruments and songs. Using songs for daily activities should help memory and language

RP7   **9** – Possibly a wider variety of instruments but I think we provide a very good musical experience

RP1   **6** – Maybe some different resources to help engage the children's interest more. Song/rhyme bags that can be pulled out with appropriate instruments etc in them

RP2   **6** – My knowledge of providing a variety of different musical experiences to the children is limited. I would be interested to learn more ways I could improve this

What, if any, are the barriers to providing high quality musical experiences at nursery?

RP4   Depth of skills of instrument playing

      Different/ wide range of instruments

RP10 Not having any previous musical experiences

RP5   Knowledge and understanding, confidence, resources and skills

RP11 No barriers that cannot be rectified. Sometimes time constraints. I am not in ratios too much

RP6   I would love some training in this area especially in the musical instrument sessions

RP8   I feel I am a barrier to providing music experiences because I don't feel I know enough about music to provide different musical activities

RP3   Lack of equipment, time to plan etc

RP9   Knowledge of benefits of singing and using instruments

      Lack of equipment/ resources

RP7   Other than not being a musician myself, none

RP1   Myself!

RP2   Resources, staff confidence, lack of knowledge in providing different musical experiences

Appendix 4: Transcription of Focus Group

24.5.18

In order to maintain anonymity, research participants' names have been replaced by RP and a number. Names appearing within the text have been replaced by alternative names so as not to hinder comprehension. My input is denoted by 'M' for moderator

Line numbers have been given so quotes used in the findings can be found in the transcript.

The transcript shows everything everyone said alongside the initial analysis codes. The transcript has also been colour coded to show how practitioners' views relate to the themes identified in the final plan found in Figure 4-1.

Where necessary, I have annotated the transcription to aid understanding and give an accurate account of the focus group. For example, where the group agreed with a point this has been indicated in italics (for example in line 58). Where the point being made would not make sense to an outside reader, I have provided context in square brackets to give clarity (for example in line 220).

Line number	Transcript	Code
1 5 10 15	M: Just before we begin I just want to say a big thank you to you all for coming along, I do really appreciate it. I want to go through the kind of terms of involvement which were on the consent form which is: your participation is voluntary, you can leave at any point and you don't have to give any reason for leaving and taking part or not taking part will not in any way affect your employment now or in the future and you only need to answer the questions that you feel comfortable answering. If anything comes up during the research that worries or concerns you then feel free to talk to me about it later. I do have to make an audio recording but just to allow me to write up, no one else will hear the recording and once I've finished it'll be destroyed. When I write it up your names will be replaced with a number so you can't tell who it is. You will be given a what they call the transcription, so the write up of what you've said, so you can read through it and if you want to clarify anything or give any feedback on any of the points you can do and once I've done a first analysis of what you've said you'll be given a chance to read that and comment on it as well. Have you got any questions about any of that? *All say no* M: Just in order to help the recording, could you try… it's fine to agree with each other but could you try not to talk over each other so the recording still gets the information. I'm	

20 25	keen to get everyone's views so please do…do participate. There are no right or wrong answers, I'm really just trying to understand views and feelings. My role is to facilitate so I will ask questions but I won't actively get involved in the conversations. I might ask more questions or I might try and get you to clarify something but I won't take part in the conversation – it's kind of a conversation for you. Is there anything any of you want to ask? *All shake their heads* M: No…ok.	
30 35	So I've had a look at the answers that you gave me from the questionnaire which were really helpful and really interesting and some of the questions that I ask will refer back to that. So the first one that I wanted to ask was, songs and sung nursery rhymes and action songs were all really popular forms of music that you did with the children, using instruments was far less common, particularly tuned instruments, so instruments that are pitched. And I just wondered if you could talk about what you think the reasons for those are and whether you think it actually matters.	
 40	RP6: <mark>Just not having the experience in giving musical lessons with instruments not having anyone to show us how to do it or how to facilitate that kind of thing with the kids.</mark>	Lack of knowledge-Instruments Lack of confidence- Instruments

	RP5: Yes, I think it's a confidence thing.	How to develop
45	RP6: How to get them to…what simple things you can do with them to get beats… you can always do their name – clap what syllables of the name is but moving on from that, don't really know how to take that further, how to expand on that, how to make it more interesting and how to move on to the next bit with them	
50	RP5: I think if you…I think if we…I think we probably know that there's like a theory and that there's a really positive outcome for doing that sort of thing but there would be a worry that you wouldn't be doing it correctly, *(general agreement)* you wouldn't be doing the right thing so if you don't play an instrument yourself, if you're not particularly musical and then you maybe would think, oh gosh, am I maybe doing the wrong thing here, so there's probably just a wee bit of that, so it's possibly maybe being able to do a little	Understanding theory

Concern not doing it right
Lack of knowledge-Instruments
Concern not doing it right |
55	course or a little workshop that would maybe give you more confidence that what you were doing was right.	Training
	RP6: Anytime you give them all an instrument it just ends up being a huge big loud noise	Noise – Instruments
60	*General agreement*	Noise – Instruments

	RP2: That's very much it.	Noise – Instruments
65	RP6: Once they all start banging and start shaking and rattling…and you can't hear the music.	
		How to develop
	RP5: And although you maybe think that's not a bad thing, for us in the 3-5 year room we would think we could maybe take that further, and there's one time where you did a really nice thing with the bells and that was good and I think I maybe did it another time on my own but didn't do it again that kind of thing was positive…so yes confidence and ability.	Lack of confidence/ knowledge
70		+ive engagement- specialist
75	RP3: I think the children engage more though if it's someone different coming into the room with instruments and things, like even yourself, that time before, you remember, with the fiddle and stuff?	
		+ive engagement- specialist
	M: So there's a benefit to there being somebody different coming in and doing it?	
80	RP3: I think so, definitely.	
	M: Do you think there is still a role for you as practitioners doing it though?	
		Practitioner build basic

	Strong general agreement: "Yes", "Definitely", "Definitely" etc		knowledge
85	RP6: Yes. For you to introduce it, to harbour an interest, so that when somebody does come in with like guitar or whatever with them, they'll have been introduced to basic music, basic rhythms.		
90 95	M: Ok, ok. So, one of the things that also came out, there's a question I asked about the benefits of music and lots of you talked about particularly language and supporting language development or gross motor skills, so you very much linked those. There weren't many comments that were specific to music, so things like learning about high notes or low notes or things about learning about rhythm and so on, and just again, just what were your views on that?		Lack of knowledge
	RP2: I suppose it's cos we don't know. If you're not musical you don't know all this – the high notes, the low notes.		Lack of knowledge-Instruments
100	RP5: If you don't play an instrument that's not the stuff you can comfortably chat about - if you don't actually play an instrument… if you can't read music. I mean you can probably say, oh that's a high note – you'd recognise that so for you that's probably quite difficult because you play several instruments so you've got a really good understanding.		

105	I mean I did use to play the trumpet up until I was 16 but that wasn't yesterday. So I've forgotten a lot of that. RP4: I think for me, I know lots about fast and slow but I think because it's not a regular thing that we do every Tuesday or every… you don't get to work up to that, especially in this room. You have to start with the basic, fast, slow, stop. Do you know. I think it needs to be regular with the same staff so everybody knows what they're doing so from my point of view you just tend to do the basics, you know you have an instrument in your hand and you do up high and down low but you don't talk about speed. So that's why I don't do it because I don't feel it's done regularly enough for them, do you know. RP5: Probably for me, what would be important for me would be understanding the theory behind offering that as an experience… RP4: Aha RP5: And what then would be the outcome for the children and what that's offering them from a cognitive and a learning benefit. So for me, I would need to understand what the theory was behind that. RP4: So when RP3 and I, when we do something musical like that, then we'll start in the	Needs to be regular activity Pract. build basic knowledge Needs to be regular activity How to develop – linked to needs to be regular activity Understanding theory Understanding theory Maintaining interest
110		
115		
120		

125	story corner for example and then when we start to lose their interest or they're getting fed up, all stand up and move to another part of the room and it's like they're doing something different although they're not.	Maintaining interest
130	RP3: It just like gets them going again…	How to develop
	RP4: And that's good too – I was going somewhere with that but I've lost my…	
	RP2: I think in the babyroom it's very much, give them an instrument, I don't know how you can get that into like a…	How to develop
135	RP1: … it's how you can put it into place, how you can do something productive with it	
		Noise
	RP2: Aha	
	RP1: It just seems to be more that they enjoy making noise *(agreement from RP2)*	How to develop
140		
	M: So it's more that you're not sure about how best to develop it to take it somewhere else?	
		Feeling music
	General agreement	
145		

150	RP4: I think from my experience, doing music with little ones based on my work at Sick Kids with kids that can't give you anything back, we would do that with young ones and we would have, like meditation music, quiet and bells and we would put it in their hands and then we would go to the opposite to [heavy] metal music so they could feel the difference, you could put their hand on the speaker or the CD player - they need to have that big contrast because they just don't get it, they just want to eat everything - that's how we built it in.	
155	RP5: So the benefits of that are?	Feeling music Music to build relationships Non-verbal communication
	RP4: So they can feel like loud and soft and they get to feel what music makes them feel, do you know and then they can build relationships with you because it if it makes them happy, or you know you don't talk to babies about how they feel but..	Music therapy
160	RP5: So it's more of a therapy type thing?	Using music to affect mood
165	RP4: Aha, or if they're all getting a bit hyper you can put on crazy music and slowly build it down. You could do some crazy music and then, I don't know, go sshh and jingle a wee bell and play a little song.	Using music to affect mood/ non-verbal communication
	RP5: Certainly if you want children to react in a certain way – so for example, I do the	

	wee relaxation, mindfulness thing that I do, I don't put loud, fast music on to do that.	
		Using music to affect mood/ non-verbal communication
170	RP4: Aha, yes.	
	RP5: So that's all about, they relate to the music that's on and I mean certainly when you put on any tune for tidy up time you wouldn't put a slow, slow – let's move about the room really slowly.	Using music to affect mood/ non-verbal communication
175	RP4: Yes, so see if you were to do that, put a calmer one on and then meditate and then stand up and do a crazy one and then get them to meditate again, they would meditate so easily quicker but if you just put a rock song on and they all went crazy, you wouldn't get them back down again.	
		Non-verbal communication
180	RP5: That's true.	
		Non-verbal communication
	RP4: It's because they've learnt to and then they associate that…	
		Non-verbal communication
	RP5: It's the association with the music – that's what it means.	
185	RP2: It's like in the babyroom with the classical music for sleeping – it's calm.	

	General agreement	
190	RP5: I suppose that's the thing that you don't always think about cos… I'm just trying to understand where it's all coming from.	Feeling music
195	RP4: Music, I always think, you don't just listen, you feel it, you can literally feel it you know…I just love music.	Non-verbal communication
	M: So there's something about music where the learning is actually in the experiencing rather than you necessarily 'teaching'?	
200	*General agreement*	Individual responses
	RP4: Yes, everybody will get something different…	
205	M: One of the other things that the questionnaires showed which I thought was quite interesting was that children who were under 3, so children who are in the 2 year room or the babyroom, they were more likely to offer music experiences daily whereas upstairs you were more likely to offer music once a week and I just wondered why you thought that was – what the reasons were behind that?	

210	RP5: You mean like singing or actually using instruments?	
215	M: So one of the first questions asked how frequently do you provide musical and the ones with the younger ones tended to tick 'daily', the ones upstairs tended to tick, 'once a week'. I can think of lots of reasons why that might be but I just wondered what you thought the reason was.	Needs to be regular habit
220	RP6: I think we've got out of the way of it up the stairs and we recognised that we haven't been actively singing and putting on music for the children whereas previously we probably had - putting backing music on, probably do singing after every story and we've just got out of the way of it.	Music instinctive with babies Using music to affect mood
225	RP5: Its' funny, we were talking about it earlier actually, outside – we were talking about that - I think I was talking to Paula [member of staff in the babyroom] about it – in the babyroom, I would sing all the time and you would sing to babies all the time and it would be like a distraction, if they were getting a little bit sad or a little bit grumpy – you would just do it – three or four times a day, you would just burst into song…You'd just do it, it happens naturally, you don't really think about it – you'd just sing – and possibly a wee bit more in here as well [2 year room]. Whereas upstairs there's a lot more conversation, children are able to explain how they're feeling so that kind of singing and song and	Music instinctive with babies Conversation instead 3-5 Music instinctive with babies

230	music for communication – trying to cheer the children up – I don't know, I thought about it today, so why don't I just come over and sit and go so 'la, la, la, la, la' [sings a small tune] and sing in the way that I did when they were in their high chairs and they were having their snack and you would just sing to them.	Conversation instead 3-5
		Conversation instead 3-5
235	RP6: They're just not expecting you to do that because there's quite a lot of conversation going on.	More structured activity 3-5
		Noise – Instruments
	RP5: Aye, it's just not quite the same dynamic. So it has to be, right let's sit down and we'll sing now.	Group size
240		Instruments
	RP6: And if you've got instruments and you've got 18 kids, you're not going to get the instruments out of the cupboard cos it's just bedlam. You don't know what you're doing, you don't know how to best do it, you've just got 18 kids going mayhem with the instruments, and everybody wants the drum…	Instruments
		Play along to tape recorder
245		Pract. build basic knowledge
	RP5: I have to say, I think the last time that I used the instruments, I had got a lot of these wee bells out of crackers like the year before and I kept them and this year, just before Christmas I put jingle bells on and we all sat and jingled the bells and sang Jingle Bells and we tried to stop when we were supposed to stop and then all join in and then	Frequency
		Frequency
250	get louder and I think that was the last time that I actually used a musical instrument and	Play along to tape recorder

	it's nearly June.	Adult/ child perspective
255	RP6: The last time I did was Scotland the Brave for Burns Day – it was loud, they probably heard it in Penicuik – you couldn't hear the music in the background whatsoever. The kids enjoyed it but I don't know why.	
	M: So there's something to do with the sheer numbers [upstairs]. Do you think its cos you're trying to do… are there other things you're trying to do with the children?	Conversation instead 3-5 Needs to be regular habit
260	RP5: Yes possibly, there's lots of chat, you know the children contribute a lot so…I don't know…it is definitely out of the way of it. We tried to introduce it as a regular part of the day again and it does happen a lot of the time but not probably as regularly as we'd like to. It's much better than it was, much better than it was. I don't know, it's definitely an age group thing where it just doesn't naturally…and they don't always join in.	Music instinctive for babies -ive response to music
265		Needs to be regular habit
	M: Right	Specialist knowledge
	RP5: That's probably cos we don't do it regularly enough.	
270	RP2: When they start school and go to a music class say every week or every fortnight or whatever it is as well, so again it's somebody – it's not the teacher doing it, it is the	Specialist knowledge

	music teacher, she knows how to play	Specialist knowledge
275	RP6: She'll play piano for them and things	
	M: Do you think that's a good thing – it stops becoming something that happens every day in conversations that you're having with the child and becomes something that…	
280	RP6: Only a specialist provides?	Specialist/ practitioner
	M: Yes	Children's confidence
		Needs to be regular habit
	RP6: No, it's probably a bad thing..	Regularity builds confidence
285	RP5: Again that's maybe something that intimidates the children who are not quite so confident, perhaps not so able. But if that was a regular thing that happened, they did singing and taking part was just something that happened every day then they would probably feel more confident.	Regularity builds confidence
		Children not judgemental
290	RP3: That's probably why they do it, to get them to sit down, to get them engaged…	Children not judgemental
	RP6: Cos they don't know good singers or bad singers	Children not judgemental

295	RP2: Cos they don't judge you do they?	Older children are judgemental?
	RP6: No, not at that age	
	RP5: Well I don't know…	Music < confidence performing
300	RP3: They think I'm Madonna here…	
305	RP5: But I was thinking, the 3 to 5's, well the ELC4s had an assembly today and it was quite interesting cos Paula was chatting about what it was like and I wondered whether or not having that sort of thing, you know the music, and singing whether or not that would help a lot of children with their confidence in that [situation]…because apparently there were quite a lot of especially boys who wouldn't say their lines and became quite uncomfortable and just wouldn't do anything, including some boys who you would think were quite vivacious and outgoing but I know those boys are not confident when it comes to that kind of thing – they're quite shy – and today they didn't do their stuff and I just wonder whether or not doing that sort of thing regularly does help and does increase that confidence for performing.	Regularity builds confidence
310		Music < confidence performing
	General agreement	

315	RP2: I think it helped with Lisa [her daughter in P1] I think because she's so shy with things but I've seen her do a couple of assemblies now and she has, this time stood up and said her lines and she wasn't as nervous as she had been at ELC. Yeah, I think it possibly does.	Music < confidence performing
320	RP5: Those skills are coming from different activities, that kind of thing that they're doing.	
	RP5 and RP2: Yeah, yeah	Regularity builds confidence
325	M: So the sort of idea of performing music - that because maybe children feel comfortable doing that, that can carry over into other skills?	
		Children not judgemental
	RP5: Yeah, it's sitting singing with you friends and just singing along to the rhymes and you know, just everybody doing it and nobody feeling intimidated or judged must be a positive thing.	
330		Music in free play
	RP4: And young children can't do it wrong – you know, you can play an instrument wrong when you're older but how can you play a tambourine wrong? Do you know? So it gives them confidence – if they're out of beat, they don't know.	

335	RP6: I actually saw Sally [4 year old child] do something nice the other day, she went over to the little box of laminated cards and she was looking through them and pulling them out and singing songs. She was obviously relating it back to the picture but she was taking each one and looking to see if she could recognise it possibly and then singing it which I thought, that's quite good, if more of the children knew that was something they could go and look at then maybe – she just started singing when she looked at the wee card – great interest - but she knows they're there but we put them tucked at the back for us. Maybe they could be more visible for the children to use as a resource.	
340		
345	RP5: Yes, cos of course we did think about just putting them on the wall so they could just…	Music in free play
	M: So they could see them?	Music in free play
350	RP6: We could just put them over the door – put lots of them cos we've got a couple but they're not at child height, they're high up.	
355	RP5: We've got another bunch of A4 ones that Anna [another member of staff] created as well. I've just never got around to doing it but we talked about putting them up cos we've got the wee yoga thing [poster on the wall] and they're all standing over there going	

	[imitates yoga position] doing all these wee yoga poses, copying the thing… so they do see that and take advantage of it, yeah.	Music in free play – knowledge
360	M: Because that was another one of – you know when you were asked to tick all the different ways that you offer music, there weren't as many ticks on the music in free play – music that children can access themselves.	Pract. build basic knowledge
	RP5: I suppose you don't really appreciate that that's how you can offer that, yeah.	
365	RP6: I suppose we don't really introduce them to any different types of music, like your jazz or your classical. We don't actually sit down and say, let's just listen to a little piece of classical music by whatever - Bach. We never do that – maybe we should be doing that at an early age because they're going to go on to school and learn about all these different types of music. We just put on our tidy up music or we'll show them Scottish	
370	music and things like that but not different genres – so maybe that's something we could bring in. *(General agreement)*. We don't actually have to do much other than just say this is what this is and let's have a listen.	
		Using music to affect mood
375	M: In the babyroom, what would you say you use music for? Or how would you use music? I mean, there was obviously a lot of music happened in the babyroom but what	

	would that music look like?	Music as distraction
380	RP1: Probably use it all the time for calming them down – as a distraction.	
	M: So it tends to be sung or recorded?	Using music to affect mood
385	RP2: I think you could do a nursery rhyme as a distraction, you know like Row, Row - they all seem to like that because you can do the actions and things. I think in that respect… *(Phone rings)*	Music in free play
390	RP1: And then we'll put music on obviously at sleep time and things like that so we use music daily for that.	
	RP2: And our instruments are kind of just in a box on the shelf that are accessible at any moment anyway, so it is just…	Music and dancing
395	RP1: Shakers	Music and dancing
		Music a link to home
	RP6: Do you put on dance type music then?	
		Music to welcome

	RP2: Kind of for a while there we had a couple of CD's, didn't we?	
400	RP1: We put that on and actually they all came up to the music, to the CD player and stand there having a wee boogie – and you can see their faces light up, so they can obviously associate that, I don't know whether it's with home or something but you do see them changing.	Children's response to music

Children's response to music

Music and dancing |
| 405 | RP3: I've seen Peter [child from the babyroom at nursery] before on a Friday morning actually, cos quite often I stick music on in the morning, I don't know why - I just think it's quite nice when they're coming in, just a wee bit music on or something like that – any day I've not had it on he comes through and points up there [to the CD player] you know. | Music and dancing

Children's response to music |
| 410 | RP1: He's usually the first one that comes through the minute that you put the CD on, especially, you know, when you have the door open and he comes through and holds onto the door and he's standing having a wee shoogle. | Children's response to music
Music and language
Music and dancing |
| 415 | RP2: Toby [another child at nursery, in the 2 yr room] for a while, went through a stage like that. | |
| | RP3: Oh, he was teaching the dollies, he was getting them up doing Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with them but it was lovely to see… he obviously loved that cos he | Music as communication |

420	asked for it all the time. Sarah, look at Sarah [another child in the 2 yr room] how much she used to just burst into song – she had such good language. She would just sit there - start singing. Getting her nappy changed, things like that, just wandering about, just dancing.	
425	M: In the 2 year old room? How would you…	Music as communication
	RP4: All the time. In most things we're doing with them you know. I give instructions singing as well as talking - what we'd do with them, you know, it would be like [sings:] "Come and sit down on the floor, come and sit down on the…" you know, all the time.	
430	M: So you use it to provide instructions?	
435	RP4: Yeah, cos it keeps them on what they're doing, cos, oh what's my hand washing one, [sings:] "Everybody wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands" you know, so instead of squirting the soap all over the floor. So all the time. We sing good morning…	Responsibility to provide Non-verbal communication
	M: So one thing that did come out [from the questionnaire] that was quite impressive was that when you – basically the questionnaire went on to ask about confidence, now even	Responsibility to provide

440	the people that didn't necessarily feel very comfortable or confident doing music, some of you still did it daily. Why is that?	Responsibility to provide
	RP2: Just because they need it - they get things from music and there's a lot of non-verbal communication in our room so I think in that respect we use it a lot for nursery	Responsibility to provide
445	rhymes, stories, things like that.	Responsibility to provide
	RP1: You can see that they're getting enjoyment from it. So even though we maybe hate it and feel really uncomfortable…	
450	RP2: We do try	
	RP1: Me personally, I'm tone deaf but you can see they enjoy it so you just have to forget about how you feel and do it for them.	
455	RP5: Yes. It's your job and it's important you do the right thing by them. _General agreement_	Your confidence > engagement
	M: Do you think the level of your confidence affects the music that you offer?	Specialist knowledge
460	_Strong agreement – "Definitely"_	

		Specialist > confidence
	M: And if it does, how does it affect it?	Confidence affects range
465	RP4: If you're not confident the children won't put their all into it. If they think, oh she feels a bit like she doesn't know what she's doing, you'll lose the kids interest.	Understanding theory
470	RP6: When you see Jake [musician coming in to do a block of music sessions with the upstairs children, funded by Creative Scotland] and his guitar and how enthusiastic they are because he's so musical and knows what he's doing as opposed to what we can provide, what we can do. We've not got that level of confidence that he has and they know it as well, they suss that out. You tend to stick to the small amount that you feel comfortable doing without expanding to other stuff.	Concern not doing it right Learning from specialist Learning from specialist
475	RP5: I think as well going back to what I said earlier, what you offer, it's what it's achieving for them. You know, you want to be able to do stuff that's going to get the best outcomes for them and not having that knowledge - well what's the best things to do? And it's like kind of watching what he's doing so we can take loads of lessons from him and sort of do some of the stuff that he does, some of the songs that he does…	Training resource Training resource
480	RP6: But you forget it though – I was trying to remember the penguin song and it's like…	

	RP5: Yes, we should maybe record it or something.	
485	RP4: I could get him to give us all the songs cos he's my friend so	+ive response from children leads to repetition
	RP6: Well he gave us a music pack.	
	RP5: Yeah, he gave us that but I haven't had a chance to look through it yet, I've had a wee flick through and there's loads of good stuff in it that we can use.	
490	RP4: Well that's good.	+ive response from children leads to repetition
495	RP5: But yes, um, trying to make sure that.. ach it's a wee bit just trial and error – you try stuff and if the children engage and really enjoy it, well that's what you continue doing and if nobody's really enjoying it… Cos that really surprised me, that blinking meatball song – they loved that and I'm away solo with that [sings:] "On top of spaghetti" apparently they sing that all the time.	Resources aimed at 3-5s
	RP3: Baby Shark	Resources aimed at 3-5s
500	RP5: Yeah, or like Baby Shark, but he sings Baby Shark. And so, there's one line in it that's funny, there's a punchline in it and they just wait for the punchline, but you know	Resources aimed at 3-5s

	that's ok, they enjoy it so you just do it.	
505	RP2: Does he come into the other rooms to do it?	
	M: No, at the moment it's just aimed at 3-5's but I think there is the potential that we could possibly ask for it to expand but it's originally being put in for the older ones.	
510	RP2: Yeah, that's a shame.	Training to < confidence Lack of knowledge - Instruments
	M: So thinking about confidence, do you think it would be beneficial to increase confidence amongst practitioners?	
515	*General agreement*	Regularity builds confidence +ive response from children leads to repetition
	M: Have you any ideas about how that could be done? What would help?	
520	RP6: Some sort of workshop thing would give us some ideas, give us some ideas especially for musical instrument provision. I totally lack ideas for that.	Lack of knowledge/ experience Feeling the music
	RP5: That and doing it more regularly, because the more often you do it and you see the	

525	results that you get and how the children react – their reaction, then you'll feel more confident that you're doing something positive.	Music and language
530	RP2: The way that [RP4] was saying earlier about doing it in hospitals and things, that's not something we would have thought of – feeling the music, you know the high and the low and you helping them to do a little shake or a loud shake, just things as simple as that – it doesn't need to be complicated.	
535	RP5: Yes, cos that's really positive cos then you're introducing language and all that sort of directional stuff – up high, down low, so that's got loads of positive outcomes there.

RP2: Yeah. | Specialist > confidence |
| 540 | M: Something I'm always quite aware of when you do get a music specialist coming in, particularly if they're coming in and playing lots of instruments, in some ways is that encouraging, or does it actually put you off because you can't do the same things?

RP6: It's off putting because if you go and get the instruments out the cupboard and just have a disaster you feel they've not gained anything out of it | Specialist > confidence
Judged by children

Music therapists

Training |

545	RP2: They're expecting you to be as good as him	
	General agreement	Training
550	RP4: I think from my experience music therapists are better than like a music teacher because they use music as a therapy so you can do that. When I worked with them at Sick Kids, they taught me how to do that so they didn't have to always come in and do it and so they were just basically piano, the tambourine, the triangle, you know, and it was just songs and it was all about volume and…	Training
555	M: So things that you are then actually able to do yourself?	
	RP4: Yeah.	
560	RP6: Maybe online workshops – not even people - things you can just sit and watch and get some ideas from.	
		Comfortable with colleague
565	M: So certainly when you were asked about barriers, the two ones that came through are kind of the two ones you've talked about just now, it was kind of a lack or knowledge or training and also a lack of equipment or musical resources. Is there anything else you	

	would add to that or do you think they are the key barriers or are there other things that put you off doing music?	Comfortable with colleague
570	RP4: Who you're working with. If you're not with someone's that – I don't know if I was with someone who didn't like music, that's bubbly…I'd maybe find that a bit hard because I'd feel like an idiot jumping about do you know, so that would make me feel a bit less confident.	Comfortable with colleague

Supportive relationship |
| 575 | M: That was actually something that came through, a number of people said I'm alright in my own room but I wouldn't want to do it anywhere else. You would agree would you?

General agreement especially from those who marked themselves as low in confidence | |
| 580 | M: But if someone did come in and show you ideas and work with you, that would be something you would feel comfortable with, sort of building a relationship?

Strong agreement from all | Instruments children use independently
Instruments children can use independently |
| 585 | M: And maybe resource-wise, what sort of resources would help?

RP1: I think in the babyroom we've got lots of bells and maraca type things, so maybe | |

	just…	
590	RP3: Something they can use themselves that's not too difficult.	
	RP2: That's it, I don't even know what it's called but the wooden thing that you just run a stick down.	Sensory enjoyment of playing
595	RP1: Like a xylophone?	Instrument to create tunes
	RP2: No.	
	M: A guiro it's called – the wooden up and down thing that you scrape?	Instrument to create rhythm
600	RP2: Yes. Just different things like that because it's all like the plastic and the bells maybe more like the wooden resources	+ive engagement- specialist
	RP6: Whereas upstairs we'd be better with like a xylophone and we could try and create little tunes.	+ive engagement- specialist
605		Pract. build basic knowledge
	RP5: I quite like the idea of the tom-tom drum type where you can start to get some sort of beats and you know hearing that kind of thing twice and you can start.	

		Play along to recorded music
610	RP6: We once did a nativity with drums – with the person that did the drums, they were quite good, picked it up quite quick. It was years ago…	
615	RP5: I remember at the primary school they used to have someone that came and did that sort of thing and it was fantastic, they loved it – there was somebody that came with a whole load of drums. That kind of appeals – to work on rhythm and beat and all that kind of thing – and you could do soft and hard and you know.	Noise
		Adult led/ controllable
620	RP6: You could probably get a sort of little child's CD player where we could put a bit of music on and they could play along and control, maybe with a xylophone or a little drum and we could have music just kind of in the middle of the table and not the actual big CD player but maybe something simple that doesn't need plugged in that could have batteries and just bung a CD in and if it was drum music to play along or something with the little xylophone and not just the bells and the bangy drums that we've got. Something a bit more…	Adult led/ controllable
		Adult led/ controllable
		Adult led/ controllable
		Group size
625	RP5: A wee bit more adult led…

RP6: Yeah, adult led and more controllable… | Adult led/ controllable |

630	RP5: More structure	Adult led/ controllable
	RP6: Like in a little group - you could do that with just a small group, even if some went outside, you could have a little group in to do a wee session like that.	Music in free play Controllable/ noise
635	RP5: Cos Jake the music guy, certainly that's like a really perfect example of like an adult led experience which is really, really positive. We try and avoid them too much but that was just really, really positive.	
	M: Adult led still does have a place in nursery it doesn't have to be all led by the child?	Controllable/ noise
640	RP6: They've got musical instruments sitting out over the road there that children can access, but I don't really know what they've got and how they control that little area so it's not just a…	
	RP5: They've got a wee music area?	Regularity → controllable Noise
645	RP6: They have got a music area but I don't know what's in it or how it's controlled so its not just like a noise coming from it all the time…	Playing along to recording Noise
	RP5: …what actually happens – it might be worth finding out what they do.	

650	RP1: Are the instruments out all the time though? If the children do access it freely it might not be such a big rammy and a big noise because it's not a novelty coming out	Instrument selection/ noise
	Agreement from RP5 and RP6	
655		Sensory
	RP6: And maybe again if they had a little player that you could put something on for them, just quiet, not noisy, but quiet so they could experiment with different instruments. It would be quite good.	Instrument selection/ noise
660	RP4: It doesn't have to be noisy – there's a place in New Lanark and they've got guitar strings attached from the ceiling to a unit so you can strum it and they've got, I don't know if they're bamboo sticks with the holes in them and they can touch the top and it's not loud.	Instrument selection/ noise
		Instrument selection/ noise
665	RP5: And it's sensory.	
	RP4: Yeah, yeah and that's really good and they've got things against the wall and beads from the ceiling and it's still musical.	Sensory/ noise
670	M: I think there's a lot you can do with choosing the right [instruments] I mean even what	Sensory

	you were saying about the drums that you use with hands rather than the drums that you hit with sticks?	
675	RP2: I think the babyroom would benefit more from that kind of thing wouldn't it?	Sensory
	RP1: Definitely.	Noise
		Lack of experience/ knowledge
	RP2: More sensory and soft	
680	M: So you actually get the feel?	
	General agreement	
		Keen to do more/ benefits
	RP2: Yeah, you actually get to feel the music and things	Lack of experience/knowledge
685		Training
	RP6: I think that's what we've got in our heads, that you're to bring it out and it's just going to be 'wah'. It's going to be painful and loud. But that again is just a lack of experience and knowledge of being able to introduce it in a different way is probably what's missing.	Range
690		

	M: Is there anything else you' like to talk about or introduce cos that's all my questions.	Training
695	RP5: I think probably we're all quite keen. I think we all understand its benefits and how positive it can be it's just knowing the right way to go about it and I think that's really it. I mean I think there's lots of other things where we've been on courses so we've introduced lots of new, innovative things and different things and you go on a wee course or you read something and you try things out and you do stuff and everybody's got their stuff they feel comfortable with and they're happy to do so that's great cos we all come together and bounce off one another in that way but maybe if we could, I don't know, maybe if you could do something?	Training
700		
	M: Well this is the ultimate plan…	Sensory
705	RP5: Oh is it?	
	M: Once I've done my research is that then actually we do something about it.	Training
710	RP5: That would be really positive, that you ran a wee in-house training thing or something and then we could take stuff from that and then roll it out.	
	RP4: There's a Drum Base down in Craigleith. Jake will be able to tell you about it. His	

	other friend Michael does drumming there and he does it for disabled children but they've got like a sensory music room and don't know if you could go and see?	
715	M: Do they? Maybe go and get some ideas, see what they've got?	Music in its own right
	RP4: Yeah	Music in its own right
		Range
720	RP5: Yeah, that kind of thing would be good.	
		Music and language
	M: Do you think music is important in its own right, I mean we've talked about how it helps language and all the rest of it but do you think it's important in its own right – that children get that experience?	Benefits of music
725		Responsibility to provide
	General agreement	
	RP5: Oh yes, absolutely – I mean you've got to try and have every experience really. You've got to try and offer them as much as you can and allow them to be able to experience all this in life and then they can make choices about what they enjoy, what they like, you know, what's good, what's bad. Certainly when I started looking into literacy and strip it right back to how you introduce literacy to babies, I mean it just kept going back to music and rhyme and action songs and a lot of stuff about how some	

children will sing before they can talk, you know, they will sing a rhyme or a song before they can actually put a sentence together so all of that stuff is without doubt beneficial and has to happen.

M: Thank you very much.

Appendix 5: Findings from first analysis of the questionnaire

Used to inform areas of discussion in the focus group

1. Staff working with 0-3 yrs are more likely to provide musical experiences on a daily basis compared to staff working with 3-5 yrs who tend to provide it once a week.
2. Songs/ sung nursery rhymes and action songs are the most popular type of musical experience offered (true for all age groups).
3. Music with instruments not as common, especially tuned instruments (only RP3). Instruments used more commonly with 0-3's.
4. Talking about music/ sounds (high/low, fast/ slow) also uncommon (only RP4 and RP3)
5. Benefits of music in supporting language development a common theme (x 9)
6. Gross motor skills, listening skills, self-expression and social skills also commonly mentioned (though not as regularly as language).
7. Very few responses identified learning intentions that are specific to music (e.g. learning about pitch, tempo, rhythm etc)
8. Emotional function also raised a few times ('enjoyment', 'soothe', 'calm', 'express love')
9. Responses showed a range of confidence in providing musical experiences but there was only a weak association with confidence and how often musical experiences are given (i.e. some staff giving themselves a low score for confidence still provided daily musical experiences; similarly some of those giving themselves a high score still only provided it once a week). No association between participants' comfort singing and how often experiences are given. Think there is an awareness amongst staff that even if they don't like doing it, they ought to do it.
10. There is a slight association between confident staff providing a wider range of musical experiences
11. Most staff were reasonably comfortable singing in front of other children and staff – but also preference for this to be staff in their own room
12. General view that staff would like to increase the breadth and depth of what they provide musically – particularly in relation to using instruments. A number of responses present the view that what they offer now is ok but they are aware it could be better and would like it to be better.
13. Lack of knowledge/ training, particularly with instruments a key barrier. A number of responses also highlight lack of resources/equipment. A number also identify the practitioner themselves as being the barrier.