

OHMI *Music-Makers* WCET Programme 2023-24

Project Evaluation

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The Centre for the Study of Practice and Culture in Education



(Credit: JAKT Photography)

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Executive summary

Music charity The OHMI Trust (OHMI) is dedicated to removing obstacles that prevent children and adults with physical disabilities from fully participating in music. By offering training programs, facilitating music sessions, and collaborating with innovative instrument developers, OHMI seeks to 'remove the barriers to music-making so as to enable full and undifferentiated participation in musical life' (OHMI, online¹).

This evaluation focuses on OHMI's *Music-Makers* WCET (Whole Class Ensemble Tuition) Programme 2023-24, which aims to provide equal access to WCET for children with additional needs in mainstream primary schools. Working closely with Nottingham, Northamptonshire and Birmingham Music Hubs, the programme assesses the requirements of children participating in WCET for the forthcoming academic year. If children are found to have physical needs that would make playing conventional instruments challenging or not possible, OHMI supplies accessible instruments, necessary equipment, staff training, and other support before WCET classes commence.

Researchers from Birmingham City University (BCU) evaluated the efficacy and impact of the *Music-Makers* WCET Programme 2023-24 using qualitative methods. This report sets out these findings and includes details on take up and nature of provision, WCET observations, adult and children perspectives, and recommendations for future iterations of the programme. This is the third consecutive evaluation of the *Music-Makers* programme undertaken by BCU (see Nenadic & Booth, 2022; Nenadic, MacGregor & Booth, 2023)².

Key Finding A: 94% of participating schools identified pupils who may experience barriers to learning a musical instrument.

Significantly, 83 out of 88 schools (94%) identified pupils who could potentially benefit from additional support with learning a musical instrument. This underlines the importance of the *Music-Makers* programme, which breaks down barriers to music education participation and access by sharing expertise and providing needs-tested accessible instruments and equipment.

¹ <https://www.ohmi.org.uk/>

² In previous evaluation reports the *Music-Makers* programme is referred to as Inclusive Access to Music Making (IAMM). This evaluation uses the *Music-Makers* title in line with OHMI guidance.

Key Finding B: *Music-Makers* enabled parity of access within WCET and positively impacted children’s musical participation.

Parity of access was evident across all WCET observations. Pupils enjoyed the same affordances of learning an instrument as their peers, from practising and improving technique, accomplishing correct fingering, producing mouthpiece buzzes and good sound quality, to volunteering ideas and enriching their peers’ musical learning. The removal of physical barriers allowed pupils to fully focus on music learning. Factors which also contributed to parity of access included the agency pupils were afforded regarding how they played their instruments, and an enabling social environment.

Key Finding C: OHMI are committed to improving communication with schools.

OHMI, with support from Music Hubs, continues to invest significant time on building impactful relationships with schools. This includes the development of new differentiated approaches to gathering information on the prevalence and nature of additional needs in schools to increase school buy-in and uptake. While the established approach (survey followed by video assessment before WCET begins) is optimal, a flexible approach is helping to mitigate issues such as reduced survey uptake and lapses in communication. The development of new communication strategies for the next iteration of *Music-Makers* is already underway.

Key Finding D: *Music-Makers* is beginning to embed in established partner schools.

The long-term collaboration between OHMI, Nottingham Music Service and Nottingham schools means that *Music-Makers* and inclusive music education is beginning to embed in everyday school life. In one case, a classroom teacher and Music Lead’s familiarity with the *Music-Makers* programme stages meant that they anticipated the initial needs analysis survey and perceived it as a routine part of the school year. This highlights the importance of long-term investment in *Music-Makers* and the value of knowledgeable, proactive Music Leads in primary schools so that communities of practice focused on musical inclusion can be nurtured and sustained.

Introduction

The OHMI *Music-Makers* WCET Programme 2023-24 (hereafter referred to as *Music-Makers*) aims to offer parity of access to whole class ensemble teaching (WCET). Through collaboration between The OHMI Trust (OHMI), Music Hubs and primary schools, *Music-Makers* enhances accessibility to WCET by identifying students who could potentially benefit from the programme and evaluating their requirements. This process allows for tailored support to be implemented during WCET, including the provision of accessible instruments and equipment and tailored support from music teachers.

Project partners

The *Music-Makers* project partners are as follows:

The OHMI Trust (OHMI)

Nottingham Music Service (NMS)

Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT)

Services for Education Birmingham Music Service (SFE)

Birmingham City University (BCU)

In addition to *Music-Makers*, OHMI's portfolio of inclusive musical initiatives includes their *Music-Makers* teaching programme for children with upper limb impairments, music teacher training, advocacy, the OHMI Instrument Hire Scheme, the OHMI Research Partnership, and initiatives like The OHMI Competition to commission the development of new adapted instruments. OHMI are project partners for the network *Music and Disability: Deconstructing the barriers to full participation* funded by UK Research and Innovation in partnership with BCU and Imperial College London.

Music Hub organisations NMS, NMPAT and SFE deliver instrumental tuition to children and young people across hundreds of primary and secondary schools alongside regional ensembles, events, and inclusive music education initiatives.

BCU were commissioned to independently evaluate *Music-Makers* from the period of September 2023 to March 2024. The evaluation was conducted by Birmingham Music Education Research Group (BMERG) members Dr Emma Nenadic and Dr Nikki Booth and data collection took place between January and March 2024. BMERG's research portfolio focuses on equity, barriers, and access in music education.

The *Music-Makers* Programme

In collaboration with Creative United (CU) and Nottingham Music Service (NMS), OHMI initiated *Music-Makers* in 2019/20. Additional funding from Arts Council England (ACE) expanded the programme to Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT) from 2022-22 and to Services For Education Birmingham Music Service (SFE) in 2022-23. Following further funding from ACE, the 2023-4 programme is now in its third iteration and is fostering long-term collaboration between OHMI, NMS, NMPAT and SFE.

***Music-Makers* programme stages**

Music-Makers consisted of the following stages:

1. **Schools survey** (beginning July 2023): schools were asked to share their total number of pupils with physical needs and non-physical needs across their incoming WCET cohort.
2. **Assessment invitation** (beginning July 2023): OHMI contacted schools which had flagged pupils with additional needs to arrange an online assessment and fully ascertain needs and implications for WCET.
3. **Online assessment and report** (beginning July 2023): *Music-Makers* assessors met with a school staff member (often a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or Music Lead) and the pupil. Pupils interacted with everyday objects which simulated playing musical instruments so that their physical requirements and implications for learning specific instruments could be assessed. Assessors completed individual assessment reports for each pupil, which were subsequently reviewed by OHMI and then shared with Music Hubs and music teachers. Reports were completed in all cases, including assessments which did not identify the need for accessible instrument/equipment. These reports included broader recommendations for inclusive music teaching for pupils with, for example, autism and slow information processing.
4. **Bespoke musical support** (beginning September 2023): In cases where young people's video assessments identified the need for accessible musical instruments and equipment, instruments and equipment were sent to respective schools ready for the first WCET classes of the autumn term.

Varied engagement with programme stages

It is important to note that not all target primary schools engaged with programme stages as set out above. Take up of the survey (initially circulated via email during June-July 2023 then twice more in September 2023 to schools that did not initially respond) was 16% lower than *Music-Makers 2022/23*, and varied interactions included: fully engaging with the survey and video assessment process, no engagement with the survey and no other communication, completing the survey but not booking a video assessment(s). To encourage the latter group of schools to re-engage with the process (and in lieu of a video assessment), OHMI invited schools throughout September – October 2023 to complete a new online form and provide further information about the additional needs of children from, by this point, the current WCET cohort. Respondents had the option to select potentially suitable accessible instruments and equipment while completing the survey, which reduced the need for a video assessment.

Alongside contacting schools, OHMI liaised with music teachers to see if information could be gathered through them. In some cases, music teachers initiated contact with OHMI/their Music Hub once music lessons were underway, having observed children who needed bespoke support. Information sharing between partners reflects the ongoing community of practice that is developing between schools, Music Hubs and OHMI (see Nenadic, MacGregor & Booth, 2023 for further information) and the collective effort to make WCET more inclusive.

As the above demonstrates, OHMI invested significant time developing different approaches to connecting with schools and pupils and had to think creatively and strategically about how best to support schools to share information. This is important as patchy engagement means that some children who are eligible for support across Birmingham, Nottingham and Northamptonshire are yet to be identified, and some children began music lessons with instruments which were not fit for purpose. The issue of how best to communicate with schools is explored from the perspective of a classroom teacher and Music Lead, and the OHMI *Music-Makers* Manager in Part B.

Key *Music-Makers* Statistics

Key statistics obtained from OHMI regarding this year's *Music-Makers* programme³ (see **Table 1**) show that a combined total of 262 children across the three Music Hub regions

³ As of 24.01.24

were identified as needing support. Of those 262 children, 34 children (13%) received adapted instruments. Significantly, 83 out of 88 schools (94%) identified students who could potentially benefit from additional support. This underscores the prevalence of obstacles to music education in schools, and the importance of programmes of support such as *Music-Makers*.

Table 1. *Music-Makers* 2023/24 statistics

	n	%
Completion of initial survey by engaged schools (T=448).	88	20%
Schools who identified students who would benefit from additional support with WCET.	83	94%
Students identified with physical and/or non-physical disabilities.	262	N/A
Students who are now using enabling instruments and/or equipment.	34	13%
Students who would benefit from additional support in WCET.	228	87%
Students who would benefit from adaptation of teaching practice/repertoire.	231	88%

Source: *The OHMI Trust*

Adapted instruments and equipment

The type and number of accessible instruments/equipment provided during *Music-Makers* 2023/24⁴ is shown in **Table 2**. The instruments in bold were witnessed in action by BCU researchers during WCET observations.

⁴ As of 24.01.24

Table 2: Adapted instruments and equipment 2023-24

Instrument/equipment	No. provided in 2023/24
Trumpet stands	7
iPad +Pocket Pet trumpet app	1
Artiphon Instrument 1	6
Guitars with straps	2
Bow holders	7
'Claritie' - support for standard clarinet	1
Clarinet stand for standard instrument	1
Trombone stand	2
One-handed recorder	2
Half size guitar	1
'Aero sax' – digital saxophone emulator	1
Flute stand	1
Pocket trumpet and floor stand	1
Left-handed trumpet and floor stand	1

Source: *The OHMI Trust*

Methodology

BCU's *Music-Makers* evaluation took place during September 2023 to March 2024 and aimed to explore three key interrelated aspects:

- The lived experiences of *Music-Makers* participants
- The accessible instrument/equipment in context
- The effectiveness of *Music-Makers* overall programme of support for improving parity of access to music-making in WCET classes, with a particular focus on the schools survey phase of the programme.

The evaluation followed a qualitative methodology, which promotes naturalistic enquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) encompassing specific settings and participants - in this case WCET sessions across a diverse range of primary schools, and the interactions between pupils and their teachers. The focus on verbal data as opposed to statistical data

(Hammersley, 2012) fostered deep insight and conveyed 'depth, diversity, subtlety and complexity' (Seale *et al.*, 2004: 15), which is appropriate for evaluating the complex field of music and disability. Qualitative methodology allows researchers to collect individual participant meanings (Creswell, 2003), which resonated with the goal of exploring the lived experiences of *Music-Makers* participants and the perceived efficacy of the *Music-Makers* programme.

Methods

The qualitative methods employed for the evaluation of the *Music-Makers* programme were as follows:

- Observations of five WCET sessions with the following accessible instruments/equipment: trumpet stand, Artiphon Instrument 1, one-handed recorder and pocket trumpet. Discussions with music teachers and classroom teachers.
- Individual interviews with pupils (3), classroom teacher (1), and OHMI *Music-Makers* Manager.

Data analysis

WCET observation data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (TA) approach, which was developed within the field of psychology and has since become a popular data analysis approach for educational research. TA is defined as 'a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (*ibid.*: 79), and enabled researchers to identify thematic ideas across the various WCET sessions and interviews.

Ethics

The *Music-Makers* evaluation received ethical approval from BCU's Health, Education, and Life Sciences Ethics Committee and adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined in the British Education Research Association's recommendations for educational research (BERA, 2018). Advice was sought from researchers with experience in the field of Disability Studies on the conduct of safe and ethical interviews with pupils with additional needs and requirements. Strategies included pupil supervision by a member of staff that works closely with them and enabling pupils to have their instruments with them in the interview to support discussion.

Report structure

The findings of this evaluation are structured into two key sections:

- Part A: WCET Observations
- Part B: Interviews

This is followed by recommendations for future iterations of *Music-Makers* and corresponding evaluation and research areas.

Context: the place of the *Music-Makers* project

In previous evaluation reports (Nenadic & Booth, 2022; Nenadic, MacGregor & Booth, 2023) we cited music education policy documents (for example, Department for Education [DfE] & Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], 2022) and cases of music education research (for instance, Zimmerman, 2011; Fautley & Whittaker, 2017; Fautley & Daubney, 2018; Fautley & Kinsella, 2018; Take It Away, 2018; Youth Music, 2020) that discuss the importance of all children having access to learn a musical instrument within a WCET context, particularly for those with physical difficulties, and how inclusivity might be achieved.

Since our last reported evaluation, the notion of inclusion, and providing the means for inclusion to occur, has been included in House of Commons (UK Parliament, 2023) and House of Lords (House of Lords, 2022; Hansard 2023) discussions. These discussions are largely based on the *National Plan for Music Education*, which states that:

[Schools should] consider whether they could helpfully cover greater inclusion of pupils with SEND [Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities] in the school's musical life. They should be willing to challenge any pre-conceptions they might have about the musical potential of a child with particular needs and should discuss adjustments with their pupils, and, where appropriate, their parents and carers. Adjustments could range from differentiating resources (as teachers would do in any school subject), to providing specific equipment, adaptation or technology to ensure music is accessible. (HM Government, 2022: 42).

Inclusion, therefore, remains a key theme in music education discourse.

In our previous evaluation reports, we have found that the *Music-Makers* project makes a substantial contribution to this area and supports young people's musical development. The ability to use an adapted instrument allowed young people with additional needs to progress with their musical learning, visiting music teachers gained a much better understanding of how to support learners with additional needs, and young people could be identified as having additional needs at Music Hub level. This information brought to the fore the need to put support in place which otherwise may have gone unnoticed.

2022/23 figures from Department for Education report over 1.5 million pupils in England with special educational needs (SEN) of which 14,324 pupils receive Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for physical disabilities as a primary type of need (DfE, 2023 online). This suggests that there are likely many more pupils who could benefit from programmes like

Music-Makers. This report details how OHMI and partners are working to reach as many pupils as possible.

Part A: WCET observations

Observations of five WCET classes took place between January - February 2024²⁰²⁴ encompassing two Music Hub regions (Birmingham and Nottingham)⁵, four primary schools⁶, four types of accessible instruments/equipment and a range of learner needs. Schools, participants, and respective pseudonyms are shown in **Table 3**. Across all schools, the provision of accessible instruments and/or equipment primarily related to pupils' physical disabilities, and all pupils had other additional learning needs. Apart from School 5, where the trumpet and stand had only been used for approximately 6 weeks, pupils had been playing their accessible instruments for several months. P1 began WCET with a conventional guitar, which was switched to an Artiphon Instrument 1 approximately a month later through intervention from the music teacher.

Table 3. Schools and participant pseudonyms

Hub	School	Pupil	Year	Accessible instrument/equipment	Classroom teacher	Music teacher
Birmingham	1	P1	4	Artiphon Instrument 1 (guitar)	CT1	MT1
Birmingham	2	P2	4	Pocket trumpet on a stand	CT2	MT2
Birmingham	3	P3	2	One-handed recorder	CT3	MT3
Nottingham	4	P4	4	Artiphon Instrument 1	CT4	MT4
Nottingham	5	P5 P6	4	Trumpet on a stand	CT5	MT5

Through the observations, BCU researchers could witness pupils' use of accessible instruments in authentic classroom environments and examine factors such as instrument design, user experience, technical practicalities, the support provided to pupils by adults, and whether the adapted instruments facilitated equitable access.

Four key themes emerged from the observations as follows:

1. Parity of access
2. Learner agency

⁵ Observations did not include Northamptonshire primary schools due to availability of participants during the data collection phase.

⁶ An observation at School 4 did not take place as scheduled due to pupil absence. However, an interview was conducted with CT4 who works closely with P4 (see Part B: Interviews).

3. The centrality of accessing bespoke musical instruments
4. Enabling social environments

The italicized passages below are excerpts from fieldnotes taken during the observations.

Parity of access

Parity of access to WCET for children with accessible instruments was evident across all visits. P1 (guitar lesson) could confidently voice and find their notes on the Artiphon Instrument 1 (see **Figure 1**) touch sensitive pads (i.e., fret board) with their left hand and press the six fins (i.e., bridge/sound board) with their right hand to produce the notes:

“Play me your Es and Fs” (MT1). MT1 prompts P1 to play and they manage it [...] “Did you get to your B string?” (MT1). Huge “yesses!” from the class, including P1. (Researcher field notes)



Figure 1: Artiphon Instrument 1 (Credit: JAKT Photography)

However, MT1 described how the ‘strike element’ - making sufficient contact with the different fins - could sometimes be “tricky” for P1, and that when the note was successfully struck there was a slight “latency” of sound. This was observable during some moments in the lesson but, for the most part, this was not an issue. MT1 is continually supporting P1 to hone their pressing technique. It is important to note that due to School 1 not receiving bespoke support at the beginning of Year 4 (see p.7), P1 had learnt on the ‘conventional’

guitar for a few weeks. Reflecting on this time, MT1 noted that P1 managed the open strings but that they would have found playing closed strings harder, inevitably creating a barrier to musical progress and their parity of access to some of the activities during this visit. P1's enjoyment was visible across the whole lesson:

P1's participation is brilliant. While going through a piece called 'Jazzy Promenade' MT1 asks pupils to do their 'funny jazz faces'. P1 really embraces this invitation, raising their eyebrows and opening their mouth. (Researcher field notes)

There were sections of the lesson when the class were in 'playing position' but voiced notes and/or rhythms only. P1 had established their own version of playing position with the support of MT1: arms crossed over their chest with the Artiphon Instrument 1 on their lap. This highlights the importance of considering parity of access regarding *all* aspects of learning an instrument. P1 was able to comfortably participate in the sections of the lesson where only playing position was required, with a concrete approach to doing so.

P2 (trumpet lesson) uses a pocket trumpet on a stand (see **Figure 2**) since due to short arms and limited reach, they cannot reach the valves on a standard trumpet. The valves on the pocket trumpet are closer to the pupil's mouth which enables them to reach the instrument. MT2 noted how positive their musical learning had been and that the sound of the pocket trumpet is the same, just slightly more 'contained'. P2 confidently joined in with the different aspects of playing the trumpet, including mouth warmups like buzzing. Generally, they were highly engaged with playing their trumpet:

MT2: "Can we get our mouthpieces?" P2 engaging with this and holding mouthpiece tightly [...] MT2: "Can someone give me a rhythm?" P2 puts hand up straight away and play crotchet, crotchet, minim. MT2 advises him to do it again, lips a bit tighter. P2 responds to this suggestion and produces a great sound. The rest of the class immediately echo P2's rhythm back on their own trumpets. (Researcher field notes)

P2 was able to engage with their music teacher, practise and improve their technique, volunteer ideas and make a positive contribution to their peers' musical learning. Similarly to P1, they appeared to enjoy playing their instrument, and would eagerly await the next opportunity to do so:

At one-point P2 pretend blows the pocket trumpet and smiles. During the non-playing activities, P2 stays very close to their trumpet, as if in a playing position. [...] They move on to a full play through. P2's cheeks puffing perfectly in time and very frequent eye contact with MT2. (Researcher field notes)



Figure 2: The pocket trumpet and floor stand played by P2

P3 (recorder lesson) plays the one-handed recorder (see **Figure 3**) and has fewer digits on both hands. The one-handed recorder is an ideal solution since it is designed for 3-4 digits and supports P3 to grip the instrument more comfortably.



Figure 3: The one-handed recorder (Credit: JAKT Photography)

Alongside enjoying the lesson, for example swaying to a Charanga warm up and 'really watching' MT3, P3 was confident finding the notes and liked to vary the different fingering

patterns they used. MT3 was supportive of P3's individual approach to fingering but regularly checked that they were managing to access the notes okay. For example:

When practising the tune Hot Cross Buns and the notes B-A-G MT3 says "remember yours [fingering]?" to P3 and demonstrates one potential approach to fingering. P3 nods and plays the notes. [...] the class are practising chords. "You won't be able to cover your chords like that, P3" says MT3 in a helpful tone, seamlessly integrating the one-handed recorder into her teaching. (Researcher field notes)

The ease with which P3 could play their instrument positively impacted their participation in non-playing musical activities (and vice versa). For example:

While looking at and listening to notated music they will shortly be playing, MT3 says "put your hand up if you think the highest note is B?" P3 raises their hand and when MT3 confirms this is the correct answer P3 smiles. (Researcher field notes)

In school 5 (trumpet and clarinet lesson), P5 uses a trumpet stand (see **Figure 4**) in the first WCET session, followed by P6 in the second session. MT5, reflecting on both pupils' additional needs, noted how it was liberating for them not to have to hold the trumpet, resulting in there being "one less thing to think about". Not having to hold up a heavy instrument puts children with additional needs and requirements on "a level with other pupils" (MT5). This was particularly important during these lessons as MT5 was teaching notes and note changes (e.g., F# to G#) that were "hard anyway" (MT5) in terms of "dexterity" (MT5) and required a lot of learning and focus from all pupils including covering "one of the trickier playing positions" and quick rhythmic passages.



Figure 4: Trumpet stand (Credit: JAKT Photography)

P5 was at ease playing the trumpet and moving between the different notes/valve combinations, and the way in which the stand allowed P5 to tilt the trumpet supported their ease of movement. They chose to use one hand to play the trumpet (another affordance of the trumpet stand) while P6 chose to use two hands. P5 would sometimes choose not to blow the instrument, focusing more on the fingering than on producing sound, but this was intermittent, and they were able to fully participate if they wished to, often while smiling. They could also interact effectively with MT5 to improve their playing and, for example, get into the correct playing position:

All are in playing position and P5 is pressing down all 3 valves. MT5 corrects this by asking P5 to lift their index finger up. P5 responds correctly. All very successful.

(Researcher field notes)

Like P3, P5 was very happy participating in non-playing activities too, including singing the melody (*the whole class singing in a lively fashion: “we play section two forte” reveling in shouting out forte*) and adding in physical gestures.

P6 could also access the trumpet provided that there was regular support from MT5 and CT5:

P6 needs regular prompting from MT5 and CT5. P6 is a brilliant listener and responds to all instructions rapidly. [...] [e.g.:]“P6, play all 3 valves” says MT5, which sparks an immediate pressing down of all 3 valves. (Researcher field notes)

P6 could access and participate in all the playing tasks including playing rhythms back to MT5 and changing from notes E to F#, and they used the finger hook to steady their grip. Like P5, they sometimes chose not to blow the notes, but this was something that could easily be resumed once P6 was ready. P6 enjoyed handling the trumpet and exploring its shape and features:

P6 puts mouthpiece on forehead, stares down mouthpiece and fiddles with the instrument tie at various points – generally quite fascinated by their instrument.

(Researcher field notes)

Similarly to P1, P6 had developed their own approach to the different bodily postures associated with playing an instrument. For “instruments down” they would sit back in their chair. Conversely, they would sit forward for “instruments ready”. While subtle, being able to perform these actions are all part of experiencing parity of access.

Learner agency

The observed pupils had agency over their musical learning through aspects such as choosing their preferred playing technique and moving between playing/non-playing postures. For instance:

- It was noted that *P2 sometimes rests their feet on the trumpet stand and hugs the pocket trumpet, seemingly taking the weight off their own body*. This enabled them to stretch and ease their back muscles and support their subsequent practising to feel physically manageable. P2 was also trusted to collect their instrument case and pack the pocket trumpet away with support from T2 – another ritual that they could enjoy alongside their peers.
- As already mentioned, P3's fingering varied depending on their own personal preference and, in MT2's words, "how they feel on the day". This was welcomed and encouraged building P2's sense of control and mastery over their instrument.
- While P5 used one hand to play the trumpet, P6 used two hands and both approaches were supported.

The opportunity for pupils to exercise agency over how they played their instruments, while yielding successful results, is likely to have increased their sense of achievement and belonging in the classroom.

The centrality of accessing bespoke musical instruments

Some pupils participated in the playing tasks only and opted out of activities that did not directly involve their instrument such as singing and answering questions about the music (the latter was in some cases related to speech and language needs). For example:

During the singing, P2 sometimes takes a pause, fiddling with their pocket trumpet and/or hugging it instead of singing. (Researcher field notes)

P6 is generally less inclined to interact with the questions and participate in the activities involving physical gestures. But as soon as the playing resumes, they are one of the first to go to their mouthpiece! (Researcher field notes)

MT2 also noted that the only key adjustment they had to make for P2 was being mindful of allocating too much time for body percussion exercises as P2 may become fatigued or it 'may not quite work' (MT2). This emphasises how central it is for pupils to access a suitable musical instrument, as the sections of the lesson where pupils had the opportunity to play their instrument (as opposed to activities such as clapping, singing, and listening to pre-

recorded music) are where they participated the most. Equally, given that clapping and other actions can be a major barrier for some learners, music teachers would benefit from ongoing CPD on developing inclusive teaching approaches which encompass the full spectrum of WCET activities - with or without a musical instrument.

Enabling social environments

The wider social environment and attitudes of teachers supported pupils' access and participation. T2 described how school 2 had an ethos of putting adaptations in place across all curriculum areas, and how they were incidentally working hard to ensure that P2 could access an upcoming school residential. They noted how, for instance, P2 uses accessible scissors and that their pocket trumpet was "just another instrument, like how P2 has a separate pair of scissors". The school's inclusive culture helped to normalize and integrate the pocket trumpet within WCET sessions. T2 shared:

...it is great to see [P2] face light up and smiling. [P2] will always find a way. [P2] inspires others; if [P2] can do it so can they. (Researcher field notes)

Alongside WCET, MT3 also taught P3 one-to-one recorder lessons. She mentioned that P3 can "lose concentration quite easily" and that it was important to structure the lesson to include lots of musical games and warmups. An important factor here is the music teacher's pedagogical expertise and ability to differentiate learning. This kind of differentiation also highlights how WCET enables social learning and participation, and how being in a whole class environment can benefit all learners' engagement and progress. Across all the visits, pupils would regularly be absorbed in the music-making of others around them, which would inspire them to join in. The social element kept them on track, building momentum and sustaining learning. For example, in School 1, the pupils clearly appreciated their weekly music lessons and their music teacher, and even asked MT1 if they could play some songs they had been learning during the previous term, which the majority remembered fully. In School 3, P3 was sat at the front of their classroom by T3's desk. T3 regularly interacted with P3 and encouraged them with their playing.

School resources can be another potential enabler. This was particularly evident in School 5, which had a dedicated music space with purpose-built instrument shelving, a piano and djembes. There was ample space to accommodate the wider radius required for a trumpet on a stand, further normalising its place within the school's WCET provision. Furthermore, MT5 had been teaching with the trumpet stand for several years and was in the habit of setting it up optimally for each pupil's physical needs.

Overall, this shows the importance of a holistic approach to building parity of access within WCET. Enabling instruments and equipment are more effective when supported by enabling classroom teachers, music teachers, peers, school policies and resources.

Summary of observation findings

Parity of access was evident across all WCET observations. Pupils enjoyed the same affordances of learning an instrument as their peers, from practising and improving technique, accomplishing correct fingering, mouthpiece buzzes and good sound quality, to volunteering ideas and enriching others' musical learning. Being able to access and participate in all the playing tasks inspired participation in non-playing activities (e.g., singing melodies, clapping rhythms) and vice versa, although some pupils gravitated towards playing activities only, which underscored the *centrality of accessing bespoke musical instruments* and the need for regular CPD on inclusive approaches to WCET. This sense of accomplishment and ostensible enjoyment of WCET (e.g., smiles, nods, engaged body language, an enthused "yes!" in response to the music teacher, continuous interaction with instrument) was underpinned by the removal of physical barriers meaning pupils could fully focus on music learning and, in the case of School 5, have "one less thing to think about" (MT5). *Learner agency* was important in building pupils' connection to their instruments and included developing individual approaches to finger patterns, playing and resting positions, and choosing whether to play the trumpet on a stand with one hand or two hands. The final theme, *enabling social environments*, noted the positive influence of classroom teachers, music teachers, peers, school policies and resources which fostered enabling and inclusive musical spaces.

Part B: Interviews

To provide further insight into the efficacy of the *Music-Makers* programme and how the inclusion, and use, of accessible instruments within the WCET context impacted on musical learning, interviews were conducted with three pupils (P1, P2, P3), a classroom teacher (CT4) and OHMI's *Music-Makers* Manager.

Pupil interviews

Three pupils⁷ were interviewed after their WCET session (see Part A for corresponding observations):

- P1: Artiphon Instrument 1 (guitar)
- P2: Pocket trumpet on a stand
- P3: One-handed recorder

All pupils had additional needs which impacted their speech development. As such, their responses were limited to one to three words, or short sentences. Having sought advice from school staff before the interviews, it was confirmed that their additional needs would not be a barrier to pupils participating in an interview as their comprehension skills and ability to respond, albeit in single words or short phrases, meant that the interview was accessible for them. The only recommended adjustments (related to P2) were to ask the questions slowly and to make the questions as clear as possible, which was actioned by the researcher. Some questions were changed to closed questions over the course of the interviews to aid understanding. The pupils were accompanied by a school staff member who supported the interview process where needed, and all pupils had parental consent to take part in an interview.

Below are six key insights from the pupil interviews:

- 1. Normalisation of accessible instruments:** When asked what instrument they play, the pupils responded 'guitar', 'trumpet' and 'recorder'. They did not differentiate between their accessible instruments and the conventional instruments in how they labelled them.
- 2. Accessibility:** When asked how it feels to play their instrument, P1 and P3 responded 'good' and P1 said it was 'comfortable' to play. P2 noted that the pocket

⁷ Due to a combination of pupil absence and staff absence it was not possible to interview P4 or P5.

trumpet was 'easy' to play. When asked if they feel comfortable holding the one-handed recorder and if it feels okay, P3 responded 'yeah'.

3. **Social element:** P1 and P2 preferred playing their instrument with other people rather than on their own, highlighting the value of the WCET model. P3 preferred playing 'on my own', which may have been linked to their receipt of one-to-one recorder lessons in addition to WCET.
4. **Self-assessing learning:** Pupils were able to share some of the basics they had been learning in that day's WCET lesson. P1 had been learning the G note, P2 had been learning the C note and 'practising', and P3 had been learning A, B and C [the latter was corrected to G by the accompanying staff member] notes and the song Hot Cross Buns.
5. **Enjoyment of and confidence with instrument:** P3 clearly enjoyed being a recorder player and enthusiastically pointed at their recorder when asked what instrument they played. They shared 'I like to press the keys down...or you can do it...put your fingers...', before proceeding to press all three fingers down onto the recorder and playing two notes in quick succession. They were confident in their knowledge of how to control and play the instrument, describing the technique as 'right hand at the bottom and left hand at the top' and 'to make the sound you blow inside...blow in...' before playing a few notes. Clearly P3 had a strong affinity to the recorder and seized opportunities to play it when they could. They also noted how their music teacher 'help[s] me out with the instruments, put[s] the fingers on', which was reflected in P3 being eager to share finger/chord positions earlier on in the interview. P3's lived experience is a strong example of the benefits and importance of the kind of provision made possible through *Music-Makers*.
6. **Continuing to learn a musical instrument:** All pupils wanted to carry on playing their instrument in the future. When asked if they were interested in learning any other instruments, P1's response was 'no'. P3 shared that it had felt 'good' to receive the one-handed recorder and that they had 'never' seen one before.

Classroom teacher interview

An interview was conducted with a classroom teacher (CT4) working in a Nottingham school (School 4), from which the following themes emerged: *communication* and *the impact of using an adapted instrument*. Following a brief contextual overview of School 4, data for each theme will be presented in turn.

Context

School 4 has a high proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The classroom teacher is a lower key stage phase leader and music lead who had previously taught P4 and therefore had a strong understanding of their needs. The music class was a Year 4 group, and this is the first-time adapted instruments have been used by children who required this support.

Communication

As previously mentioned, schools had varied engagement with the programme stages. This raised the importance of evaluating survey invitees' experiences to identify how the surveys and subsequent steps could be improved. The interview therefore included questions related to communication between schools and *Music-Makers* partners. School 4 filled out the initial survey in July 2023 but did not participate in a video assessment. They then answered the follow up form in October 2023.

Regarding the initial survey stage, the classroom teacher stated how quick, easy, and organised the process was:

CT4: We got an e-mail with the survey [link] in the summer before the Year 4s were going to start. ... [If I need any further information about the survey,] it's a pretty quick phone call or e-mail back to ask someone. ... With the emails, they [OHMI] also e-mail the school admin[istration team]. So, if I miss something, the admin will then forward it to me. So, I get two chances to kind of like remind me to do it [the survey], which is helpful.

Therefore, a key enabling factor for completing the survey included effective sharing of internal school information. CT4's positive experience with the initial survey stage was also linked to her established role as Music Lead in School 4. She had worked with NMS and OHMI since the inception of *Music-Makers* and her familiarity with the programme stages meant that she anticipated the survey and perceived it as a routine part of the school year. The way in which the process had started to embed itself in School 4 highlights the importance of long-term investment in *Music-Makers* and, more broadly, the value of knowledgeable, proactive Music Leads in primary schools so that communities of practice focused on musical inclusion can be sustained.

CT4 valued how *Music-Makers* established and then shared key information about pupils' needs with WCET music teachers:

CT4: Providing information in the survey is really useful for when the music staff [WCET teachers] come in because they already know and then they ask the best way to kind of deal with those children. ... It's a great survey.

This suggests that the strengthened communication between school staff and WCET teachers is likely to have enhanced the music teacher's ability to teach inclusively.

Following the survey stage, CT4 described how a Zoom meeting was organised to assess the physical needs of the young person (P4) requiring an adapted instrument. On this occasion, however, miscommunication seemed to occur, and the assessment was not able to take place.

CT4: We were invited to a Zoom interview and were asked to bring some things just so that they [the assessors] could assess her [the child's] physical needs, but I don't know why, but the Zoom [meeting] didn't go through, but it wasn't me that organised it. Sometimes it comes to me. Sometimes it comes to our SENCO [Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator], but I don't know why it didn't take place because we came to the Zoom meeting, but nobody came ... and then when I looked back at the e-mail that had been sent to me that morning, I think that they [the assessors] were waiting for a confirmation.

So, school 4 had intended to fully participate in the *Music-Makers* stages but a minor step, sending digital confirmation, had been mistakenly missed. This kind of setback exemplifies the everyday challenges of busy schools, which impacts on teachers' capacity to engage with external stakeholders and keep track of back-and-forth communication. It also highlights the potential for information to be missed or for confusion to arise when more than one member of staff is in receipt of external communications. As school 4 are pro-active, long-term collaborators, they were able to re-enter the *Music-Makers* process through the alternative follow up form described earlier on in the report. This new development from OHMI, alongside ongoing efforts from staff members on both sides, was therefore important in ensuring P4 went on to receive the right support.

The impact of using an adapted instrument

CT4 spoke of how excited P4 was and how special they felt to receive the adapted instrument (in this case an Artiphon Instrument 1) and use it within WCET sessions.

CT4: You could see the difference in [P4] because [they were] over the moon ... I think it made [them] feel special as well. ... the fact that provision had been

made for [them] just meant a lot, I think, to [them]. ... [P4] then came in and showed us all how to use it and everything. ... [They were] like: "it's for me." And [they] was so excited. Yeah, so excited. It's amazing.

As a result, CT4 felt that P4 made progress during the lessons and that this progress may not have occurred without the adapted instrument.

CT4: P4 really, really struggles with fine major skills, and I don't think [they] would have had the physical strength in [their] fingers to pluck the strings and to use the frets, whereas this [the Artiphon Instrument 1] was easy because [P4] could put it on the table and could focus all [their] attention on playing the keys. ... In all, I don't think [they] would have made much progress at all in the lessons without it.

The way in which the accessible instruments enabled P4 to 'focus all their attention on playing' resonates MT5's perspective on the benefits of the trumpet stand for P5 and P6.

This powerful testament underlines how providing instruments that are physically comfortable and which therefore allow pupils to concentrate on musical learning can be empowering and transformative. It is challenging to consider how P4 would have felt had they not received an accessible instrument, and how this might have negatively shaped their perception of music education as something that was not for them.

OHMI *Music-Makers* Manager interview

In addition to the teacher interview, an interview also took place with OHMI's *Music-Makers* Manager which focused on schools' varied engagement with the programme stages and the learning from this. To establish themes that emerged during the conversation, data were analysed in a similar way to the teacher interview. Based on the responses gathered, the following themes emerged: *areas for development within the current communication system* and *moving the communication process forward*. Data for each theme will be presented in turn.

Areas for development within the current communication system

As previously stated, the current communication system begins with schools being sent a link to a survey (contained within an email) to provide OHMI with some initial information about the types of alternative instrumental provision that may be required. Despite the

benefits of receiving this important information, it is not without its current challenges; particularly who to contact within the school setting, schools being aware of the important work the *Music-Makers* project has to offer, and school-based internet issues with opening links contained within an email.

OHMI Manager: So, I'd say the first challenge is getting the survey to the right person [at the school]. ... Often it goes to [the] admin[istration team], and they don't know what it [the email] is; they think it's sales or something like that. Even though we say we're doing this on behalf of the music service that they work with. Also, I imagine they get thousands of emails every day, so it just gets swept to a side. ... Some of them [administration teams in schools] are absolutely amazing and will send it [the email] to the right person, but for some of them, it just gets lost in there. So that's difficult. ... Schools struggle to open the survey sometimes. Sometimes that's their Internet [firewalls] at school.

This captures the complexities of communicating with schools and the way in which emails can be easily missed. The OHMI Manager elaborated on the varied understanding of their work and the possible misconceptions about pupils' eligibility for video assessment:

OHMI Manager: It's also challenging when a staff member has not heard of it [OHMI and/or the *Music-Makers* project] before or they don't know why they're filling it [the survey] in. Sometimes they tend to think: "Oh no, we don't have any children that have got any needs." Therefore, we just don't know whether there was anyone or not. I wonder, then, whether a lot of those schools are the ones that the music teachers then contact us later on in the year, saying: "Oh, we need this."

The visibility of *Music-Makers* and limited awareness of solutions available links back to an earlier point on the benefits of having long-term partners who are familiar with and trust in the efficacy of the process. Prior experience may increase the likelihood of schools ensuring that the programme can serve *all* children with additional needs so that all needs are tested and accounted for. While music teachers were invaluable allies in facilitating children receiving accessible instruments, ongoing improvement to the process will increase the proportion of pupils who have support in place before lessons commence.

Challenges also exist in the post-survey phase, the assessment of a young person's individual need and what instrumental adaptations they may require.

OHMI Manager: Once the survey has been filled in, it then moves into booking the video call and the phone call. Again, that's really tricky because that goes through that same process [as the survey communication] of where does that email go? It ends up with admin[istration] and they might not know that someone's even filled in the survey.

As illustrated by CT4's account earlier, the issue of 'where does that email go' is also coupled with having adequate time to read and respond to emails which require action.

These opening phases are important, not only so that valuable information can be shared with visiting music teachers; but so that provision can be made for learners with physical, and non-physical, needs.

OHMI Manager: [The survey and assessments] are really, really helpful in terms of [identifying] the actual needs of the student and in especially the non-physical needs. For example, this student really should be sat nearer the front or not next to these people, or behavioral stuff that staff could really do with knowing. That can really be helpful.

Moving the communication process forward

Several sub-themes emerged with regards to moving the communication phases forward. The first sub-theme focuses on OHMI's commitment to and flexibility with providing a ***fluid process*** of initial communication to schools to maximize uptake and timeliness of bespoke support.

OHMI Manager: If we can get all schools to fill out the surveys and do the assessment process, it means the [adapted] instrument can be there before the child starts, so the child has been thought about before the actual music lesson. So, it's a more fluid process rather than a music teacher emailing me when lessons have started saying: "Oh, I've got this problem, the child can't play this on their instrument or can't hold it properly."

The **fluid process** led by OHMI in this iteration of the *Music-Makers* programme included repeated survey reminders, allowing schools to fill out surveys later than planned, developing an additional form that fulfilled some of the functions of the video assessments for those who missed out on the latter, and being on hand to respond to schools at any stage in the academic year following music teacher/Music Hub referrals.

The second and third sub-themes relate to areas of improvement for future iterations of *Music-Makers*. Firstly, incorporating eye-catching information about adapted instruments – e.g., their design and benefits - in future surveys to **increase school awareness and buy-in**.

OHMI Manager: Maybe we could make schools more aware in terms of what they could get from this. So, for example, if it's a brass school, we would explain that this trumpet stand or this trombone stand can really help students with this, this and this. We could put something like that into the survey that could say a little more and explain why this is the case.

The OHMI Manager also mentioned that in future iterations of *Music-Makers*, school survey invitations will come directly from Music Hubs rather than from OHMI. This has the potential to increase buy-in and uptake as schools are more likely to be familiar with their respective Music Hub and trust that it is worthwhile engaging with.

The third sub-theme is establishing **direct communication** with a lead school contact by allowing respondents to leave their contact details while completing the survey.

OHMI Manager: ... make sure we're asking them [the person filling out the survey] to leave an e-mail [address] for them. The person that is filling it in and the number for the person that is filling it in rather than having to always skip through all of the hoops of getting through the school systems to get to that person. ... Obviously, every year it can change, but we're hoping the majority of them [respondents] will be the same each year and that e-mail can then go to that person, and they know what they're doing. ... We just need a bit more information like this, so we can really hone in on what instrument they [the learner] need.

The above approaches adopted by OHMI, both current and under development, illustrate OHMI's commitment, creativity, and resourcefulness in reaching schools and enabling positive, ethical music education experiences for all children with additional needs.

Summary of interview findings

Interviewing pupils, a classroom teacher and OHMI's *Music-Makers* Manager offered a broad insight into the efficacy and impact of the *Music-Makers* programme. Based on these perspectives, the programme achieved its goal of enabling parity of access. Pupils named their instruments as per respective conventional instruments which - corroborated by WCET observations - suggests they were not 'othered' during WCET, they had successful and physically comfortable user experiences, could discuss their musical learning (which was similar to peers), expressed enjoyment playing the instrument, and wanted to carry on playing their instrument in the future. The classroom teacher emphasised how 'special' and transformative the Artiphon Instrument 1 had been for their pupil and how vital it was from a physical strength and musical progress perspective.

The communication system between OHMI and schools was also discussed and was deemed effective by the classroom teacher. A key factor in this was the school's buy in; they had collaborated with NMS and OHMI for some years and therefore understood and trusted the process. Additionally, the classroom teacher was the school's long-term Music Lead, enabling information to reach her more efficiently. Despite this, a minor communication error occurred between the school and OHMI which frustrated the *Music-Makers* process. OHMI's *Music-Makers* Manager discussed challenges to smooth communication which included schools knowing who to contact within the school setting, capacity to action emails, schools being aware of *Music-Makers*, misconceptions regarding pupils' eligibility for video assessments, and school-based internet issues. She discussed OHMI's commitment to and flexibility with providing a fluid process of initial communication to schools to maximize uptake and timeliness of bespoke support, including follow up forms that fulfilled some of the functions of the video assessment. Some further communication strategies are under development for future *Music-Makers* iterations.

Recommendations

Based on this evaluation, four key recommendations are outlined below, which relate to scaling up the Music-Makers programme, further development of differentiated communication strategies, ongoing monitoring of accessible instruments and the need to protect music education provision in primary schools.

Key Recommendation 1: Continuing and scaling up *Music-Makers* so that all young people can fully participate in WCET.

As 94% of participating schools identified pupils who could potentially benefit from additional support with learning a musical instrument. Based on this high demand across only three Music Hubs areas, and there being over 1.5 million children in England with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE, 2023 online), there is a need for bespoke support in many other primary school settings around the country. *Music-Makers* requires additional funding, capacity and investment so that this vital work can be rolled out nationally and reach more young people. By doing so, schools will be empowered to ‘helpfully cover greater inclusion of pupils with SEND in the school’s musical life’ (HM Government, 2022: 42) as per the latest *National Plan for Music Education*.

Key Recommendation 2: Continue to build impactful relationships with schools through the development of creative and differentiated communication strategies.

BCU supports OHMI’s ongoing work on developing new surveys, tools and pathways for early phases of *Music-Makers* to increase school buy-in and take up, and timeliness of bespoke support. Changes will include Music Hubs sending out surveys in the next cycle to increase programme visibility and embedding eye-catching descriptors of accessible instruments in the surveys to further increase teachers’ understanding and readiness for the following stages.

Key Recommendation 3: Music teacher CPD to support inclusive approaches across full spectrum of WCET activities.

BCU researchers noted the centrality of accessing bespoke musical instruments for *Music-Makers* participants who often showed greater participation in instrument playing compared with other activities such as clapping and adding actions to music. To ensure that *all* aspects of WCET sessions can be fully accessed, music teachers would benefit from ongoing CPD on developing inclusive teaching approaches which encompass the full spectrum of WCET

activities. Equally, ongoing monitoring of accessible instruments is an important practice to embed in *Music-Makers* so that user-specific adjustments can be made where required. This is aided by the community of practice for inclusive music education, which is developing between OHMI, Music Hubs, schools and BCU.

Key Recommendation 4: Protecting music education in primary schools and investing in Music Leads.

The evaluation found that *Music-Makers* has begun to be embedded in participating primary schools, owing to their long-term participation in the programme and Music Leads' knowledge of how OHMI supports schools. Policy makers and School Senior Leaders would further enable musical development for all pupils in their schools by ensuring that there is sustained music education provision in primary schools, including investing in Music Leads. This, in partnership with Music Hub Lead Organisations, is key to the success of programmes like *Music-Makers*.

Possible Further Evaluation and Research Areas

Several possible further evaluation and research areas have been identified for OHMI and future evaluators:

Communication and awareness across schools and Music Hubs:

- To evaluate the efficacy of the new communication strategies being developed by OHMI.
- To reach schools that do not participate in *Music-Makers* and explore barriers to participation.
- To assess schools' and Music Hubs' awareness of and potential interest in *Music-Makers* beyond the current partner regions.

Learner trajectories:

- An evaluation spanning the whole academic year to see how pupils progress over a longer period.
- To investigate continuity rates and progression routes of *Music-Makers* participants.

Evaluating more diverse contexts:

- To conduct further *Music-Makers* evaluations encompassing new school settings and participants.
- To research other types of accessible instruments and equipment.

Perspectives and practices of wider *Music-Makers* stakeholders:

- Seeking the perspectives of assessors who conducted video assessments and document analysis of assessment reports.
- To research and document resources and pedagogies music teachers employ when teaching accessible instrument learners.
- Observing and documenting OHMI music teacher training sessions.

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