



SAFE FACE TO FACE WORKING BY CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

**Eight case studies profiling face to face
creative work with children and young
people in schools and communities**

January 2021

This work was commissioned by the Arts in Education Recovery Group (AiERG)

AiERG Members

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the children, young people, families, schools, artists and third sector organisations who gave up their time to be involved.

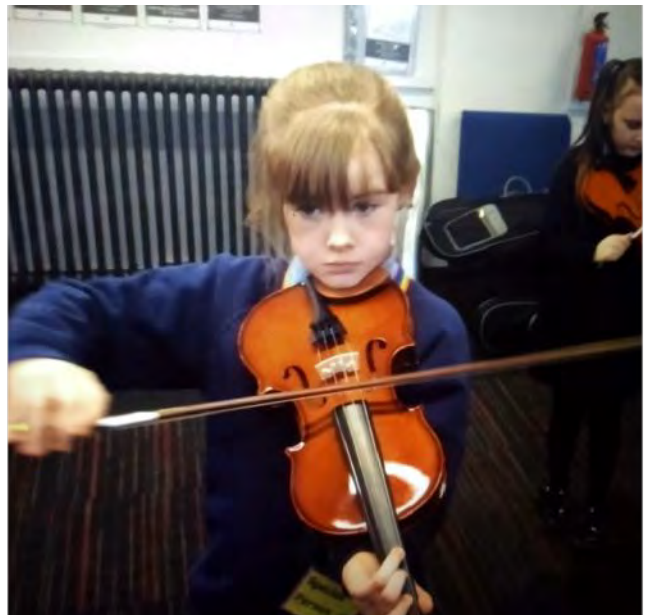
FOREWORD

by the Arts in Education
Recovery Group

Engaging with the arts and creativity can make a meaningful difference to children and young people, and the recovery and renewal of their learning, mental health and wellbeing, both during and after lockdown.

The arts and cultural sector in Scotland is well placed to support children, young people, education partners and communities, particularly during the current pandemic. Creative practitioners can add value to the role of schools and teachers through building relationships with children and young people and providing a creative output for expression and a physical and emotional space for respite and processing to happen.

Understandably many artists and creative practitioners have been restricted in their ability to work face to face throughout the pandemic.



Some of these restrictions are clearly understood due to the need to minimise the spread of Covid-19 (such as restrictions on singing), however other restrictions are less clear, with interpretations being made at an individual level, and leading to a huge loss of confidence and uncertainty across the sector and with partners.

Inevitably children and young people are missing out due to a lack of understanding and confidence on what can be delivered safely.

Nevertheless, many freelancers and arts organisations have successfully made adaptations to be able to continue working throughout this time. A large focus of this work was initially on digital provision; however as and when schools and community settings have been able to reopen, some practitioners and organisations have started to offer, face-to-face delivery, within educational and community settings.





This report offers 8 case studies highlighting where creative practitioners and organisations have successfully delivered face to face work over the past six months in partnerships; in schools, in communities, and with families.

The report was commissioned by the Arts in Education Recovery Group, a collective of organisations who are committed to ensuring that children and young people in Scotland benefit from the unique qualities of engaging with the arts, culture and creativity, during the pandemic and beyond.

Each case study offers three perspectives; that of the creative practitioner, the partner, (school or other setting), and the children and young people.

The case studies show that exciting, innovating, high quality creative work has been having a significant impact on children and young people in Scotland, including those living within the most challenging circumstances.





The positive impacts on children and young people's learning and wellbeing are clear throughout.

This work does not contradict any of the Scottish Government relevant guidance or advice. All of the case studies outline how freelancers and organisations worked within the guidance for their region and to the current tier of restrictions. The case studies are intended as a resource that brings to life where partnerships, rigorous planning, a willingness to adapt and creativity can come together in the best interests of our children and young people in Scotland!

OVERVIEW REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the key lessons learned from eight case studies focusing on expressive arts with children and young people in Scotland, during the Covid-19 global pandemic. The case studies were developed in December 2020.



IMPACT

The eight expressive arts projects involved in this work had a positive impact on children, young people and families. Engaging with the arts through these projects made a difference to:

- **Connections**



helping children and young people to make friends, develop stronger links with their peers and build positive relationships with adults

IMPACT

- **Health and wellbeing**



helping children and young people feel calmer and more focused, express their feelings and find their voice, manage their moods and energy and providing a safe, warm space



- **Attendance and engagement at school**



with children and young people enjoying the activities and finding they help with learning at school

- **Skills**



with children and young people learning new things as well as gaining recognition through accreditation and awards and building their aspirations and goals

- **Happiness**



with the projects supporting children and young people to feel happy and joyful.

“ They have formed a fantastic friendship with each other and really used this group and their shared experiences as a brilliant base to bond them together.”

-Pupil support assistant-

“ It also feels like I’m actually learning stuff that I can apply to the real world.”

-Young person-

“ I feel really excited and happy.”

-Child-

“ Fun, laughter all round, excitement!”

-Parent-

“ It’s clear that the group is very supportive of each other and there is a sense of camaraderie.”

-Parent-

WHAT PRECAUTIONS DID PROJECTS TAKE?

The arrangements for each project were thought through very carefully in the context of that project, setting and participants. All projects undertook risk assessments, explored the Scottish Government guidelines for their sector in detail and shared risk assessments with partners and families. Risk assessments were regularly updated, in light of changing context and restrictions.

The type of precautions considered included:

- **MASKS**

In most cases, adults wore masks. This included in indoor environments, in schools except when directly teaching, and outdoors when children were being picked up or dropped off. In some cases, older young people wore masks, for example when travelling to the project, moving around corridors or when undertaking activities.

- **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Adults involved in the projects socially distanced from other adults and from the children and young people they worked with. At times this meant that projects had to find a larger space to enable distancing. Sometimes projects had small group sizes to enable social distancing. It was particularly important that projects bringing children and young people from different classes or schools had strong social distancing arrangements in place. Pupils were often taught in one class or a bubble at a time.

• MOVEMENT

Most projects had to think carefully about how adults moved around the building. This included safe entry and exit arrangements for visitors to schools, limited movement around the school and visitors ensuring not to touch anything when moving around. For projects working with young children, safe drop off and pick up procedures were agreed to avoid lots of adults being in the same space.

• SINGING

Not being able to sing has impacted quite a bit on work with younger pupils. The focus has shifted to rhythm, pulse and spoken word activity.

• CLEANING

There was a strong focus on regular hand cleaning and sanitising. Work spaces, desks and equipment was also cleaned or quarantined between uses. Where possible equipment was not shared between pupils or classes. Some projects found that young people were getting very used to taking responsibility for cleaning their work space after use, because of the arrangements in schools.



...we've been trying to do melody things through playing instead of singing, so I would play something on my violin or we play them a piece of music, so they still get that aural connection...but the kids are still really enjoying it and they're still engaging which is really important."

-Tutor-

LESSONS LEARNED: CREATIVE PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS

Five of the case studies involved some delivery in a school environment on a face to face basis during 2020. All of these projects were already delivering in schools before the pandemic. The work was able to go ahead because:

- **Organisations** had good relationships with teachers and the senior management team in the school.
- **The project** was part of the curriculum and/ or offered young people the opportunity to gain an award or accreditation.
- **Teachers and senior management** recognised the benefit of the project for their pupils. This could be because teachers had attended and supported sessions in the past, there was strong evaluation evidence about impact, or a high level of awareness of the project throughout the school.
- **Time** was spent planning how the project would work in the context of the new restrictions. This included staff visits to the school and teachers supporting the sessions through undertaking preparation work.

Projects had to work very closely with schools to organise access to the school. In some cases, the schools were initially not allowing any external visitors in autumn 2020. A process of negotiation and discussion was required to explore the benefits and risks of allowing projects to go ahead.

“ ...It was also down to the communication with the Sistema staff. They are very engaging, they always communicate what is going well and any problems, and are very flexible.”

-Teacher-

In some cases, project staff were seen as members of the school team. This helped schools to view their visit in a similar way as they would a supply teacher or other part time team member.

Discussions about visiting the school were strongly dependent on head teacher attitudes to visitors in the school. Senior local authority education officials also had a key role in giving permission for this type of work to take place.

Over time, in some projects, confidence grew and projects returned more regularly, included more pupils, or expanded to cover more schools.

“ The main thing is just planning. We’ve had to discuss with lots of people, make sure we’re sticking to the guidelines, make sure everyone involved knows what’s going on.”
-Tutor-



LESSONS LEARNED: OUTDOOR LEARNING

Four of the case studies involved an element of outdoor learning. The projects found that outdoor learning could help make activity possible, when it wouldn't be possible or would be challenging in an indoor environment.

Often projects started small, working one-to-one or in very small groups. Most projects stayed small - often smaller than guidelines would allow - to ensure a cautious and safe approach.

Projects which involved young children in an outdoor environment found that they preferred this way of working and that it was more impactful, helping to connect children with nature and build bonds between children and adults.

Projects found that generally children were well equipped for the outdoors, and well wrapped up. However, in some cases parents needed help with suitable clothing to be warm and dry outdoors. When working outdoors, projects used the natural environment to find large sheltered (which enabled distancing) in wet or windy weather.



“Being outside is awesome because you can get mud on your face!”
-Child-

LESSONS LEARNED: ONLINE LEARNING

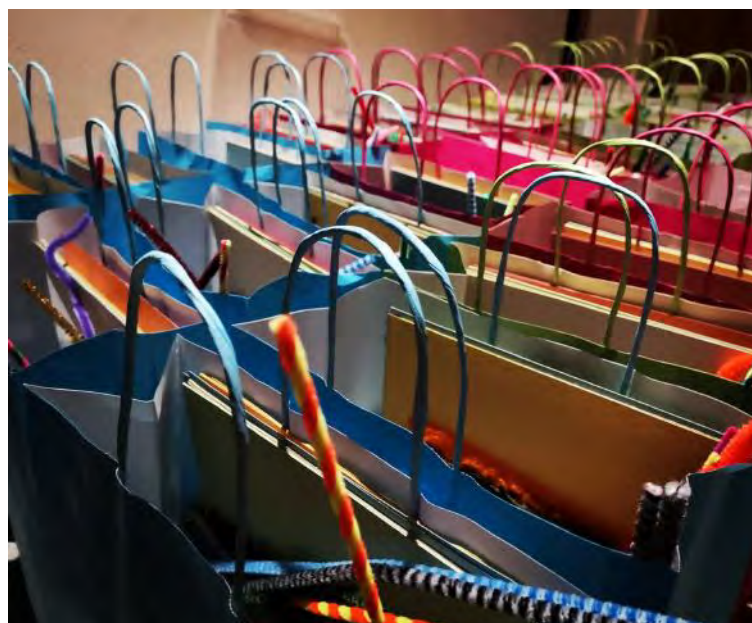
Online learning worked well when:

- It was with a group of children and young people that projects already knew
- It was with a group of children and young people who knew one another
- It was short and sharp
- It was coupled with offline tasks
- It was supported with activity packs and resources
- Recorded sessions were available for people to access at a time that suited them.

Projects learned that online learning generally had to be shorter than face to face sessions would be, to hold children and young people's attention.

Having a strong online platform also helped some projects to communicate with participants about requirements for attending face to face sessions, so people knew what was expected in advance.

Projects recognised that some children, young people and families could face barriers to online learning. Projects also found that as soon as face to face options were available, children, young people and parents / carers were all very keen to meet up. Interest in online sessions declined as more face to face activity opened up.



ADVICE FOR OTHERS

The eight projects involved as case studies found that it was important to:

- **Be flexible** - restrictions change quickly and what you did in the past may no longer work
- **Work closely with partners** - agree a step by step plan of exactly what needs to happen
- **Be patient** - understand partner approaches to restrictions and follow the procedures that schools have in place
- **Take a sensible and cautious approach at first** - try something small scale first then build on it if it works
- **Support parents** - some projects found that children and young people adapted more quickly to new restrictions than parents
- **Connect in different ways** - provide information in advance and summaries of activities afterwards, as families can no longer come to projects to see what is happening
- **Explore different guidance** - often creative projects do not fit into one category for Covid-19 guidelines so projects found it was important to explore different written guidance and talk to others about what they are doing.



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CREATIVITY AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

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ARTICULATE

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 1

Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic



ABOUT THIS PROJECT



Articulate Cultural Trust works with care experienced young people in Scotland. It uses art, culture and creativity to challenge loneliness, support connectivity and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

In June 2019, Articulate began working with a group of care experienced young people at a secondary school in East Renfrewshire. Young people took part in taster sessions in a range of art forms including music, graffiti art and photography. They decided that they wanted the project to focus on graffiti art.

From September 2019 to February 2020, five young people worked with a designer, commercial and graffiti artist during weekly sessions. They took part in skills based workshops, sharing their learning and skills.

An artist worked with the young people through to early March 2020, at which point the project was due to shift to reflection and assessment, to enable the young people to gain an Arts Award. With the schools closing in late March 2020, the project had to adapt and find new ways of working.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Initially, when the schools closed in spring 2020 the project came to a 'full stop'. Articulate staff got in touch with the teacher several times between spring and summer, but with nobody in schools it was not possible to keep the project going. By June, the school confirmed that it would love for the project to run in the first term of 2020/21.

When the school first re-opened in August it was not allowing any external visitors. There was a lot of negotiation and discussion between Articulate and the school, and Articulate staff felt that a real exception was made to allow the project back in to meet the young people face to face.

“ There wasn't anyone who wasn't a teacher getting in. ”

-Articulate-

By September 2020, Articulate staff were able to go into the school twice, to meet the young people and complete their work on the Arts Award. A range of protocols were followed, including:

- Adults wore masks
- Adults were socially distanced from the young people
- Activity took place in a larger space
- Safe entry and exit arrangements were in place
- Articulate staff waited outside the building to be collected
- Articulate staff did not go anywhere without a teacher
- Articulate staff did not touch anything
- Hands were washed regularly.

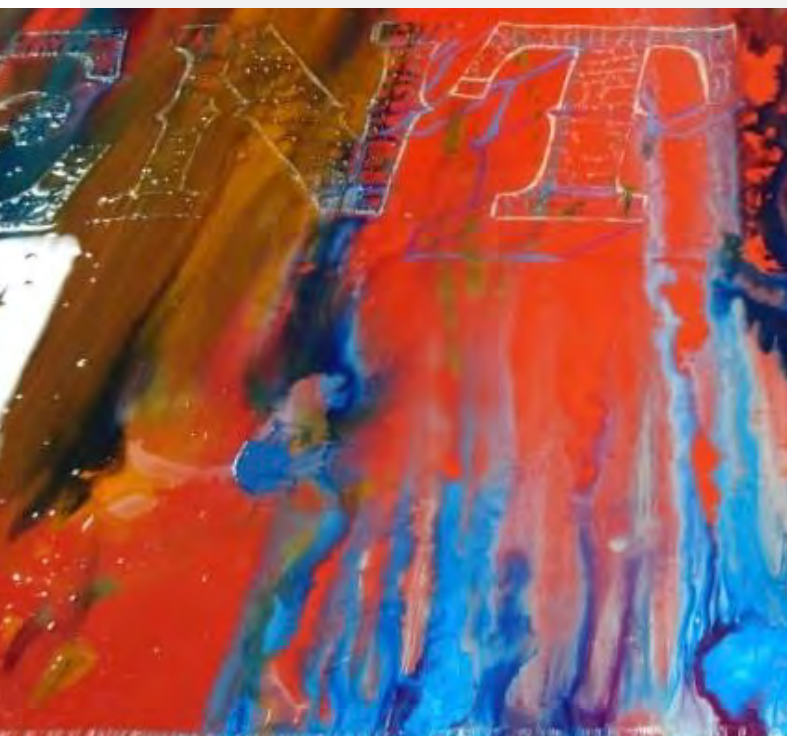
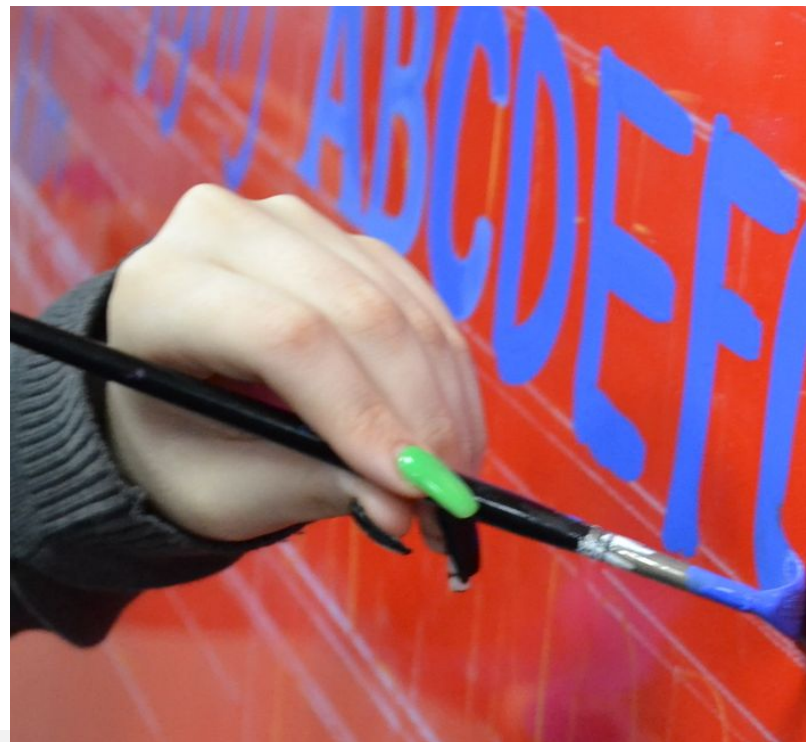




Articulate staff spoke with the school and followed all of their required protocols. Articulate staff also worked together to share their understanding of the guidance and changing restrictions, and how these applied to their work in different situations.

In addition to running the two face to face sessions, the project kept in touch with the school through:

- enabling Articulate to review Arts Award workbooks for each pupil by dropping these off in a box outside the school for pick up and deposit; and
- communicating via What's App about any extra evidence pupils needed such as photos or text to support their workbook.



Articulate believes that the face to face work was possible because the school was very keen to ensure that the young people achieved their Arts Awards, and really recognised the benefit of the project. The young people had really formed a bond, and there had been lots of evaluation evidence demonstrating how important the project was to them.



“ The project was really well supported from the start. ”

- Articulate

The face to face work was also made possible as teachers understood the value of the work. Teachers and support workers had previously observed and supported the art sessions and seen the impact on the young people both during the project, and more widely in their other classes. Some young people were school refusers but the project was the one point in the school week that they would always come in for. There was a high level of awareness of the project, and teachers and support workers across the school understood the value of the project, were interested in it and talked proudly of it.



IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Articulate gathered evaluation evidence from teachers, support staff and young people to demonstrate the impact of the project. This showed the project built:

Sense of belonging

The project helped to cement existing friendships and develop new bonds within and between year groups. This was particularly important as many struggled to develop deep friendships before the course.



“ They have formed a fantastic friendship with each other and really used this group and their shared experiences as a brilliant base to bond them together. ”

- Pupil Support Assistant



Trinity College London

entered by Articulate Cultural Trust

is awarded

Arts Award Bronze
Level 1 Award
in the Arts

Place of entry: Glasgow (Centre no. 64016)
Certificate issued: 14 September 2018

Sarah Kemp
Chief Executive, Trinity College London
Patron HRH The Duke of Kent so



Qualification number: 50N/0081/6
Unit number: K/60N/1721
Certificate issue number: 1
Trinity ID: F18438156783-8166040291
Candidate number: 138466040291



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TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Attendance and engagement

Participants were more likely to attend school or part of the day, particularly on the days that the project was running. The young people also began taking part in other classes in a more active way.

Confidence

School staff noticed significant changes in the confidence of the young people. This was particularly important as several participants had global learning difficulties or required extensive support to access the curriculum based on learning needs, which had impacted on their confidence.

Wellbeing

The project helped young people be more focused, calmer and concentrate better. This was particularly important as all had difficult family situations which impacted differently on a daily basis.

“ From teaching x in S4, I noticed a difference in terms of her self-esteem and confidence. She was more open to share stories... She volunteered answers regularly in class, seemed more content and upbeat about school life and the path she wants to follow on leaving school. ”

- Teacher

“ The learning opportunities supported our students to develop confidence in expressing their own points of view and helped them recognise, articulate and value the skills they were developing. ”

- Head Teacher

“ The young people really blossomed and responded to the project and the artist. ”

- Teacher

Trust

The project provided a safe and nurturing space for young people away from the pressures and stress of school life.

Learning new skills

The young people enjoyed taking part in the project, and learning new skills.

Accreditation

All five young people involved in the project achieved their Bronze Arts Award. Articulate staff were permitted to go into the school in November 2020 for a small, socially distanced awards ceremony. This helped to recognise the young people's achievements.

The large wall panel that the young people created is now permanently sited in the school corridor.

“ Young people achieving the Arts Award in these circumstances was pretty incredible. ”

- Articulate

“ I found S's self belief grew exponentially last year. He developed a self-assured, can-do attitude and seems like a young person who will aim towards his goals regardless of any barrier in his way. ”

- Teacher

“ I liked learning new skills and making the big board was really fun.

I enjoyed using different techniques, using skills that you wouldn't normally get, something different. It was a completely unique opportunity.

I loved it. I loved the whole thing.

I liked how there were lots of different styles and mindsets... I saw lots of different types of graffiti which was all very unique.

- Young people

LEARNING

From this experience, Articulate has learned:

- be patient - it can take time to build trust in working together
- be flexible - try to offer as many solutions as possible
- adapt - whatever you did in the past probably isn't going to work now
- understand - while it is possible to do face to face work in some schools, others are not so comfortable with this - even within the same authority.

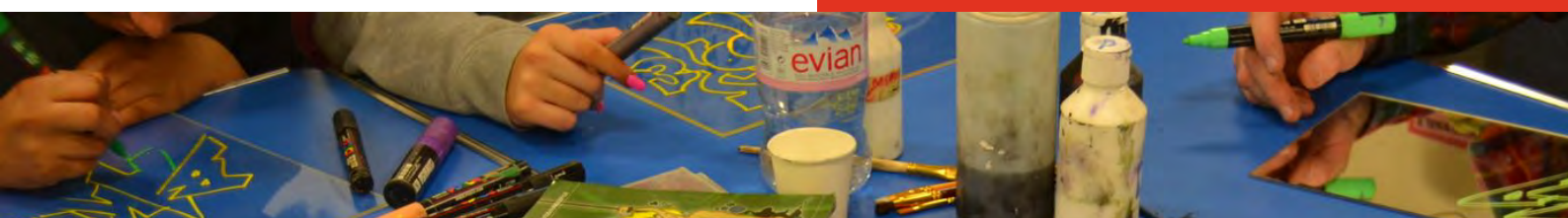
In December 2020 Articulate began running the project in another school. Now that schools have been open for longer, Articulate staff feel the processes for speaking to teachers and visiting schools are clearer.

Approaches such as Test and Trace, mask wearing and social distancing are now all well established as safeguards, and there is a high degree of trust that these measures are effective.

This work involved two different year groups (S2 and S4) and these pupils needed to be socially distanced. However, because the project targets care experienced young people the numbers in one year group were relatively small and the project could be quite isolating - so the mixing of year groups was important.

Articulate has found that it is possible to go into another school because:

- There is clear evaluation evidence about the first project
- There is a lot of goodwill from the first project
- Trying the approach in one school gave a good foundation from which to build a new plan.





ARTICULATE



ARTSPARKS

JUPITER ARTLAND

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 2

Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic



ABOUT THIS PROJECT



Jupiter Artland is a contemporary sculpture park and art gallery in West Lothian. Jupiter Artland Foundation is a registered charity which offers classes, workshops and events. Since around 2010, Jupiter Artland has offered Artsparks outdoor learning classes for children. Normally these are based in a classroom which is set within a garden in a 100-acre estate.

The aim of the classes is to introduce children to art, nature and creativity. Parents pay for the classes and sign children up to attend each term. Classes cost £150 for a 10 week block of 2 hour sessions. There are four classes a week - two for early years children aged 3 to 5, and two for primary age children aged 5 to 10.

In March 2020, all of the learning classes stopped. Classes did not run for the spring/summer term, and all learning staff were furloughed until July. On their return, learning staff explored interest in re-starting the outdoor learning classes. They found that there was a very high level of interest among their existing client group.

»

“ The response was overwhelmingly - yes!

”

Jupiter Artland

Then, the project explored how best it could run the activities in a safe and fun way. In autumn 2020, the classes were re-started and are now entirely held outdoors. There is no set base, classroom or indoor facility at all.

The classes restarted with a weekly cohort of 34 children in four separate two-hour long classes. Recent classes have included investigations into the world of mini-beasts and birds, learning about building and lighting fires safely, and making paint out of foraged berries. The children who attend are from both West Lothian and Edinburgh, with Jupiter Artland lying on the boundary between the two authorities.

Around half of the children had not previously attended classes at Jupiter Artland, reflecting the immediate need of families to have access to learning activities and opportunities to socialise with their peers.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The Jupiter Artland outdoor space was open to the public from May 2020. This meant that while the learning team was on furlough, many of the approaches to keeping visitors safe were already being well established. When the learning team returned and classes started in September, it felt like a very safe environment in which to work with children, with tried and tested procedures.

The learning team reviewed the relevant guidelines for working with children and young people and adapted their practice accordingly. The team found that Artsparks did not fit into one category for the guidance, but spanned across several. However, because the organisation had a strong focus on outdoor learning already, it found that procedures did not need to change too significantly.

“The big surprise for me was how little we actually had to change.”
- Jupiter Artland -

Jupiter Artland has always had rigorous outdoor learning policies, and these were updated on a regular basis using the Scottish Government's guidelines. Parents were informed that these were dynamic documents, and that they should ensure they stayed up to date with approaches. Artsparks staff were also regularly in touch with parents to explain when guidelines and requirements changed.

Adaptations were made including:

- The indoor space is no longer used at all and the door is kept closed to ensure children familiar with the space from previous sessions do not try to access it.
- Parents are asked to drop their children at a drop off place, and are not allowed to come through the gate of the garden area.
- Parents are asked to wear face masks when dropping off and picking up children - in line with guidance for schools.
- Materials are kept at a minimum which reduces the risk of any cross contamination between learners and leaders.
- Group sizes are kept small - 8 for 3 to 5 year olds, and 10 for 5 to 10 year olds.
- There is regular hand washing and hand sanitising. Some parents have chosen to provide their child with their own sanitiser.
- Children are asked to bring their own snacks - where previously the project provided juice and a biscuit.
- Staff distance from one another and other adults. However, they do not need to distance from the young children (aged 3 to 5) as they prioritise their wellbeing. With the 5-10 age group staff stay more distanced, but are still able to help with first aid or outdoor toileting as required.



“ Being outdoors is our major saving grace. ” - Jupiter Artland -

The woodland provides plenty shelter with many trees, and on windy days the Artsparks project is able to adapt and move away from the wooded areas to ensure the safety of the children.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Artsparks classes are having an impact on confidence, friendships and skills.



“ I have noticed his confidence grow and awareness and curiosity of nature increase.
- **Parent** - ”

Children enjoy the classes and feel that they learn lots of new and interesting things. Children mentioned learning practical skills, like cooking on a fire, building fires or making paint, as well as wider life skills like making friends.

The children like being outdoors whatever the weather and are happy to wrap up warm with lots of layers.

“ We learned how to draw new pictures and make details.

I feel like I have achieved something, like making a fire, climbed a tree, made my own art.

- **Children** - ”

“ It's clear that the group is very supportive of each other and there is a sense of camaraderie. ”

- **Parent** -



“ When I am outside and with my friends it always makes me feel happy. ”

“ Being outside is awesome because you can get mud on your face! ”

“ I feel happy and excited. ”

“ I like being outside. I would rather be outside than inside. I like to be in nature. ”

- Children -

The children involved in this case study said they didn't mind washing their hands more. Most didn't mind the adults wearing masks, although some found it a little strange. Some parents said that safety measures like masks, distancing and hand sanitising were now relatively normal for their children.

Parents feel that being able to get back outdoors and play and learn with other children has made a big difference to their children's lives. Many highlighted how much their children missed Artsparks when it wasn't running during lockdown. One parent felt that the skills their children had learned at Artsparks had helped them during lockdown, enabling them to play safely and independently in an outdoor environment.

Also since lockdown, Artsparks has engaged more local people from West Lothian. Traditionally most parents came to the project from nearby Edinburgh. However the restrictions on travel may have helped the project to become more connected to the immediate community, and gain a local audience.

Jupiter Artland staff believe the approach is more impactful outdoors, creating special and unique learning experiences.

“ I don't like adults wearing masks, but I know it's good for them and us. ”
- **Child** -

“ [my child] is so used to adults wearing masks now that i don't think she even notices. ”
- **Parent** -

“ It's been huge for their mental health. ”
- **Parent** -

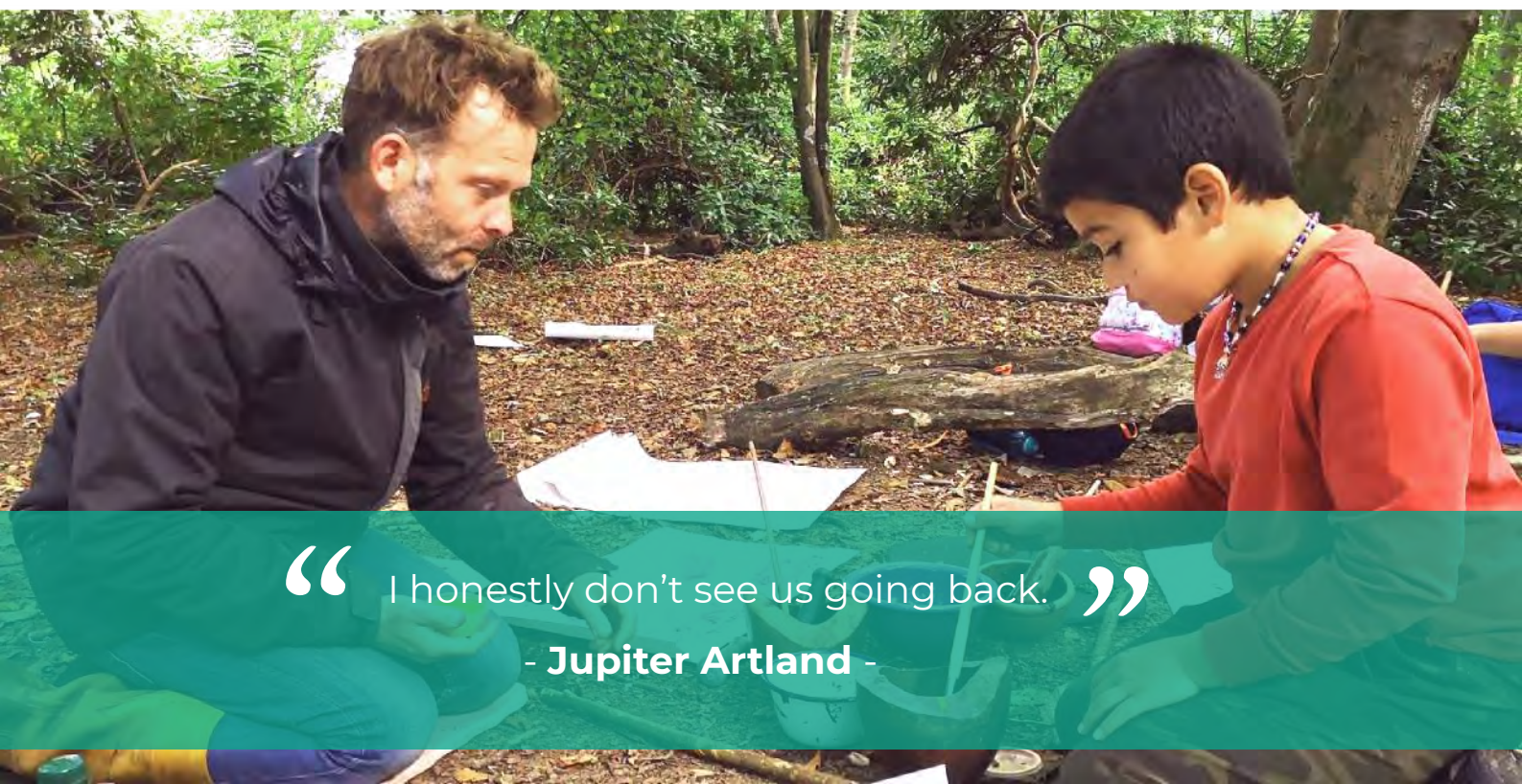
“ It has most definitely helped her become more independent. She is really quite adventurous when we're out and about now! She's also much more aware of her surroundings. ”
- **Parent** -

LEARNING

The children adapted quickly to new approaches. Artsparks supported this by ensuring that old spaces that children were familiar with were used only for outdoor drop off, and the children were then taken away into the estate away from the spaces they used to use.

However, it was more difficult to encourage parents to adapt. There was some resistance from a minority to mask wearing, and some parents found it hard to drop their child off and leave them at the allotted points. Parents also sometimes used the spaces for socialising, and needed reminding to observe social distancing rules. Over time, Artsparks has become more direct, strict and assertive with parents that the rules must be followed.

Parents also initially found it quite hard to imagine what the children had done during the session, as they couldn't see the space. Now, each week parents receive a summary of activities and some pictures so that they can chat to their child about what they did and continue the learning at home.



“ I honestly don't see us going back. ”

- Jupiter Artland -



ARTSPARKS

JUPITER ARTLAND



FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS SHMU

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 3

Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Station House Media Unit (SHMU) is a cultural charity in Aberdeen. It supports people in disadvantaged communities, both geographic and communities of interest. It focuses on radio and video production, traditional and online publications, music production and digital inclusion. The organisation also supports a range of accredited qualifications across North East Scotland, including the BFI Film Academy, Moving Image Arts AS-Level film qualification, and a number of SQA media, employability, and personal development qualifications.

Since 2019, SHMU has been involved in delivering the Creative & Digital Media Foundation Apprenticeship in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council. Foundation Apprenticeships support young people to learn about the world of work and gain industry knowledge while still at school, while gaining a qualification at the same level as a Higher. Young people choose the apprenticeship as part of their subject choices for S5 and S6, spend time with a learning provider, and work on industry projects supported by experienced colleagues.

Aberdeenshire Council approached SHMU to explore whether it could deliver a Creative and Digital Media Foundation Apprenticeship. SHMU was keen to be involved, designed a programme and Aberdeenshire Council then contracted SHMU to deliver the programme. The opportunity was offered to schools as part of S5 and S6 subject choices for both 2019/20 and 2020/21. Pupils took part over a whole school year, for approximately 5 hours in school and 3.5 hours in SHMU each week.

In 2019/20, there was a strong cohort of 17 pupils from Westhill Academy who selected the Creative and Digital Media Foundation Apprenticeship. The programme involved classroom based activity, practical experience at SHMU and a media project for an external client.

ONLINE DELIVERY

In March 2020, as the public health situation emerged, the project was initially significantly impacted. The students were just about to start their project for their external client. Clients began contacting SHMU to say they couldn't have any external visitors. The clients were in key industries - care homes, schools for young people with additional support needs, and construction. All felt it was unsafe for young people to be at their site. Then at the end of March, the schools closed.

SHMU worked with the school to make a new plan for delivery. While schools were closed they used Teams to communicate with pupils directly. Teams was already in use in the school, and there were clear protocols - for example cameras were disabled. This worked well as SHMU already had a good relationship with the young people, and the schools and young people were keen that they finished their Apprenticeship and gained their qualification. Initially SHMU stuck to the timetabled slots, but it became clear that as young people dealt with the situation and adapted to working at home, that a more fluid approach would be beneficial. SHMU adapted to catch up with each young person as it suited.

The young people were able to complete their apprenticeship and gain their qualification.

In June 2020, the programme began again in two schools. As the schools were still closed, delivery remained online. This required a new group on Teams, involving young people who didn't necessarily know one another and had never met the staff at SHMU. This was timetabled as if they were in a school, with blocked out times when SHMU could engage online. As the schools were still closed, delivery remained online. This required a new group on Teams, involving young people who didn't necessarily know one another and had never met the staff at SHMU. This was timetabled as if they were in a school, with blocked out times when SHMU could engage online.

From experience, it was felt online engagement would be higher, if the sessions were shorter, rather than staying online for the full 80 minute session. SHMU adapted the sessions and used the time to provide short introductions to topics, class discussion and then provided topics for pupils to research offline in their own time. They then followed up in the next session. This worked reasonably well, with pupils responding to the tasks. By then, the pupils were all used to working in this way.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

In August 2020, SHMU was able to return to face to face work with young people. This was made possible as Aberdeenshire Council contacted SHMU in summer to say that they were keen for the Foundation Apprenticeship to be delivered in school, if SHMU was happy with this. SHMU, Aberdeenshire Council and the schools had many joint discussions and produced risk assessments. This involved considering:

- Staff distancing from pupils
- Staff wearing masks
- Pupils from different schools being socially distanced
- Cleaning all equipment after use
- Carefully planning how visitors accessed the building and moved around the school.

SHMU found that the school had done a lot of work to explain the roles and responsibilities to pupils, and pupils were happy to clean their own work area after use.

There was a short time when all delivery took place within the school. Pupils did not travel to SHMU for any activities at first. This was because this was the first time schools had any visitors since March, and the schools wanted to be very careful. Further risk assessment was then undertaken to review whether pupils could travel to SHMU.

To enable this to happen:

- Pupils were transported to SHMU by bus - in a bubble
- Pupils wore face masks on the bus
- Pupils arrived and got straight to work - instead of having lunch or socialising which they previously used to do
- Pupils sanitised their hands on entry and exit of every room
- Pupils from different schools are socially distanced.





To introduce the face to face work safely, SHMU followed the guidance on both education and youth work. SHMU also accessed very useful guidance from Youth Scotland, and received support from Aberdeenshire Council and its education department. The risk assessment was produced and sent to Aberdeenshire Council's education department for review.

A key part of this review involved travel between authority areas. SHMU is in Aberdeen while the schools are in Aberdeenshire. There was some concern about travel between authorities. However it was decided that this was possible due to it being for education purposes, and that pupils would not interact with anyone else in the time they were out of school other than their fellow pupils and SHMU staff who already worked with the pupils in school.



IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Discussion with three current participants highlighted the positive impact of the Foundation Apprenticeship on young people's skills, confidence and aspirations for the future.

SKILLS

Young people highly valued the practical skills that they learned through working with SHMU. They learned creative skills around operating radio and camera equipment, editing, filming, camera techniques and angles and creating storyboards. Young people also learned general skills around leading others, working as a team, planning and research skills.

“ It also feels like I'm actually learning stuff that I can apply to the real world. ”

- **Young person** -



CONFIDENCE

Young people felt more confident as a result of working with SHMU. This included confidence in meeting new people, leading others, volunteering to try new things and confidence on radio and on camera. Young people also felt more confident in their own skills and abilities as a result of the Foundation Apprenticeship.

Linked to this, some young people felt that they were able to express their ideas, be creative, have opinions and be listened to when working with SHMU.

“ I think my confidence has definitely improved a lot. ”
- **Young person** -

“ It's just made me more open to getting to know new people, because of how I've made new friends doing this ”
- **Young person** -

“ I do really like the film-making and radio because it feels like your voice is heard. ”
- **Young person** -

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Working with SHMU has helped young people to learn about the range of opportunities available in the media and creativity and explore different roles in film and radio. It has helped young people to explore their interests and develop clearer ideas about future careers and learning.

“ It’s made me more, like, clear on what I’m interested in for the future. ”
- **Young person** -

“ It’s definitely been... a major eye opener just to see how much stuff there is outside of school that you can do. ”
- **Young person** -

Young people have become excited and positive about their future.

“ The course made me feel good and confident about my future. ”
- **Young person** -

“ It makes me feel good... It makes me feel excited for what the future can bring. ”
- **Young person** -

LEARNING

The Foundation Apprenticeship programme brings together pupils from different schools. In these circumstances, it is vital that the pupils are kept socially distanced. This has had an impact on networking and friendships. Staff from SHMU are also not able to pop in to meet the young people, as they are not in the building. Now the building feels quiet, when it used to be bustling and noisy.

The apprenticeship involves a project for an external client. Young people are still not able to do work experience on a face to face basis. However, SHMU is introducing a project for external clients which will involve engagement via Teams and some outdoors work.

Before face to face delivery began, SHMU had a step by step procedure about what everybody needed to do. This involved all partners - SHMU, schools and the council. All worked together to make sure that everyone understood what to do to keep people safe. There were some concerns and anxieties from staff about going into a school environment at first. Now, SHMU staff feel that schools are a pretty safe environment, and the pupils stick well to the rules.



FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIPS SHMU



EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL AND SPARTANS

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 4

Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Spartans Alternative School (Spartans) is part of the Spartans Community Football Academy in Edinburgh, which re-invests profits to support positive social impacts in the community. Spartans support young people who find it challenging to cope for five days a week in school, and may be at risk of exclusion. Students attend part-time - normally 1.5 days a week - and also attend their mainstream school. Schools fund attendance at Spartans through their Pupil Equity Funding. In addition the City of Edinburgh Council part fund the project.

Spartans began working with Edinburgh International Book Festival (the Book Festival) in January 2020. The Book Festival got in touch with Spartans to offer a two term project as part of its wider Citizen project.

This is a long term project in north Edinburgh and Musselburgh, working with children from nursery age through to secondary school. As part of this project, the Book Festival has a community writer and schools writer in residence.

The Book Festival had already worked with a number of schools in the area in 2019, and was keen to build relationships with new schools. It approached Spartans to offer the project, which involved a writer working with children in S3 and S4.

Spartans liked the idea of having someone come into the school to focus on spoken word poetry, and felt it was a good fit with their activities. The work was fully funded by the Book Festival.

In early 2020, the writer worked with a group of pupils through approximately five sessions. However, in March 2020, when schools closed, the spoken word poetry activity paused. Spartans made the decision to prioritise English and Maths learning through its online learning activities. The students attending Spartans have very clear and robust intended outcomes in these areas. This was the main focus initially. After this, Spartans began considering other areas of work.

In the spring to summer term, virtual learning was undertaken online using video conferencing. This required a lot of co-ordination and support and was very time consuming. Spartans did not feel it had capacity to introduce another element of virtual learning in the summer term - particularly with an external organisation. Instead, the Book Festival distributed an education pack with some writing tasks and activities, through the school in the summer term. Face to face activity then resumed after the summer, in September 2020.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

In August 2020, the Book Festival got back in touch with Spartans and offered another 10 weeks of the poetry project. The work was restarted, with the artist attending the school face to face. To make the work safe, Spartans worked with the artist in the same way as they would with any other member of staff.

- There are only eight young people in the building at any one time. This is normal practice for Spartans, which focuses on intensive work with a small number of pupils.
- Work is undertaken on a one to one or one to two basis. This is also normal practice for Spartans due to the needs of the pupils.
- Delivery is indoors, in large spaces, or outdoors.
- S4 to S6 pupils wear masks.
- Staff are socially distanced from the young people.
- There is one laptop for the young people, and one for the member of staff.
- Activity is delivered outdoors as much as possible - involving movement and fresh air.
- Hands are regularly sanitised.
- Tables and equipment are wiped down before the next session.
- The temperature of all visitors is taken on arrival.
- Each young person has their own 'fidget bag' with their own sensory tools and equipment for every subject.
- The work was fully risk assessed by the Book Festival and Spartans.



Spartans and the Book Festival worked together to agree a sensible and cautious approach. Spartans felt confident in the existing positive relationship that it had with the Book Festival, and was happy that risks would be fully assessed and activity well managed. The organisations were able to discuss the approach in advance, and the school felt that the Book Festival was great at communicating, efficient and organised. Both Spartans and the Book Festival had a full risk assessment for the activity, which they updated regularly.

The artist was from a different local authority area, but Spartans and the Book Festival agreed it was appropriate for the artist to travel for educational and work reasons. The artist was provided with a letter setting out her need to travel for education and work purposes. The Book Festival worked with the artist to agree procedures such as taking private transport, filling up with petrol in her home local authority area, and taking lunch so that she didn't need to visit local shops.

The young people took responsibility for many of the safety measures themselves. Young people clean their own work area and equipment, and some very much benefit from this clear structure and routine.

“ I like using the cameras. I liked the rapping it was boss, I was good at it. I think I'll write again. ”

“ My rapping skills improved - I've just gone platinum. ”

“ I liked meeting the rappers, I liked finding out more about spoken word and I liked taking the photos. ”

“ It was fun, good. ”

- Young People -

IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

The curriculum for S3 and S4 pupils has a lot of non-fiction content, and Spartans believes that the work with the Book Festival gives young people the chance to explore creative writing and enjoy it. The work has helped pupils across the curriculum, with problem solving and creative approaches.

Young people developed new skills through the work, including writing, talking about poems and rap material, rhyming and performing. These skills helped them in English and in other areas of their lives.

The head teacher believes the work is very responsive to the interests of the young people and enables naturally occurring learning which suits the needs of the young people involved. The artist has found that needs can change week by week, and it is vital to be flexible.

“ There is a real focus on creative and reflective writing.

- **Headteacher** - ”



The work has helped students to find their voice, be heard and express themselves. The artist found that many of the young people, who have chaotic and challenging home lives, were not used to being asked their opinion and valued this opportunity. The young people have become more confident in talking about their opinions and having conversations.

Involving a visitor to the school also helped the young people to build positive relationships with adults. The relationship the young people built with the artist was strong, and the young people very much enjoyed the sessions.

The activity was well designed, with plenty opportunities for movement and being outdoors - for example going outside to take photographs. This worked well for the young people in terms of their health and wellbeing, while also making the work as safe as possible.

“ I think anything that allows them to have more positive relationships with adults and engage with new adults is good for them. ”
- **Headteacher** -



LEARNING

Masks have been a bit of a challenge for some pupils with autism, which mean pupils can misread cues. The school bought some lipreading masks but these were very warm and did not work well.

The project has tried to undertake as much outdoor activity as possible, to enhance safety for staff and young people. This has been welcomed by the young people, who enjoy the chance to have movement and fresh air.

The success of the project is very dependent on the individual artist working with the school. The current artist is a very good fit, and shares the same learning style as the school with a focus on empowerment and pupil voice. Spartans believe that it is very important to meet the individual involved before agreeing to a project of this nature.

When undertaking risk assessments, Spartans, the Book Festival and the artist discussed the range of challenges the young participants face in their everyday lives, the risk of Covid to these young people, and the risk of not continuing the creative work. Together, they agreed that the risk for these young people was actually greater if the creative work did not continue, which set the framework for decisions to be made to enable this work to happen safely and effectively. This framework then had to be adaptable and flexible, to fit with the changing context.





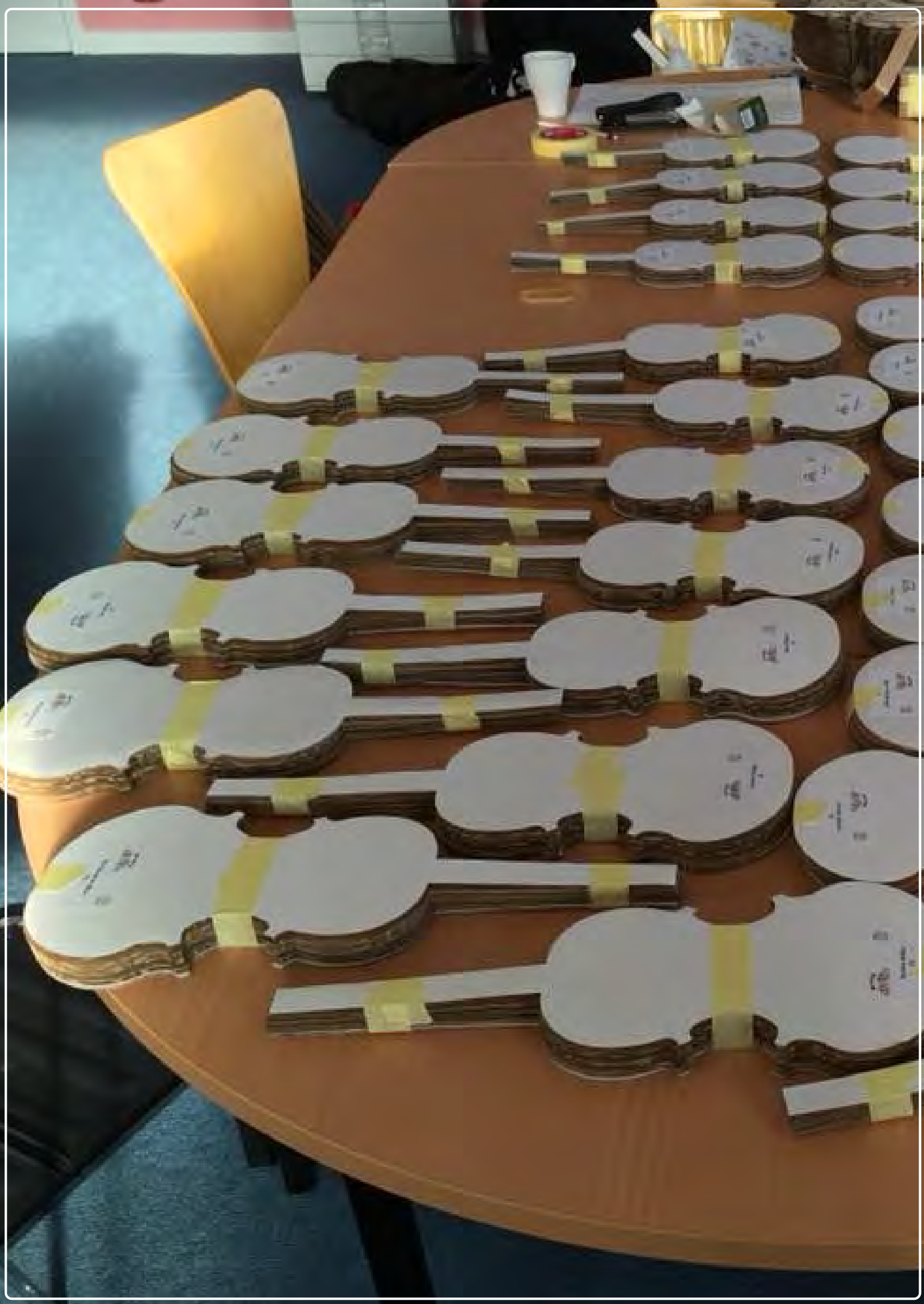
EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL AND SPARTANS

BIG NOISE DOUGLAS SISTEMA SCOTLAND

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 5



Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic



ABOUT THIS PROJECT



Sistema Scotland works to improve lives and strengthen communities through its Big Noise programmes which run in four areas of Scotland. This case study focuses on work in Douglas in Dundee, in two primary schools. Big Noise Douglas is delivered by Sistema Scotland in partnership with Optimistic Sound and Dundee City Council and with the support of Strategic Partner, Gannochy Trust.

Sistema Scotland began work in these schools in autumn 2017. It worked with P1 to P3 pupils, offering all pupils two Big Noise sessions a week of 30 to 45 minutes as part of the curriculum. The sessions focused on pre-instrumental skills, singing, pulse and rhythm in P1 and early P2. In P2, pupils made a cardboard instrument and learned how to hold and use it. At the end of P2 pupils got a real instrument, and lessons in P3 focused on playing together twice a week.

Within these schools, Sistema also ran a weekly nursery lesson, an after-school club for P3 to P6 pupils which ran three nights a week, and a parent and child Baby Noise session. Sistema Scotland staff worked closely with both schools, and had a good relationship with the teachers and head teachers.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

In March 2020, the week before full national lockdown, Sistema took the decision to pause all face to face delivery. Over the first couple of weeks, Sistema Scotland staff contacted each family registered with the after-school club, explored their connectivity and made plans for ongoing contact. They established individual contact through weekly 30 minute lessons on zoom for each child taking part in the after-school club. This required quick work to explore online child protection, risks and safety protocols (such as saying hi to a parent at the beginning of each call).

Sistema Scotland also produced pre-recorded videos for distribution for P1 to P3 pupils through the two schools. These were issued in the summer term. They also started running drop in online lessons for groups. Previously around 99% of staff time was spent out at schools doing face to face work. This shift required a huge learning curve and was a big change for the organisation.

“ We changed more in a month than we did in the previous six years! ”

- Sistema -

In the summer term, Sistema Scotland began delivering face to face sessions at one of the primary schools which was a hub for children of key workers and vulnerable children. The school covered six primaries and one secondary, and Sistema Scotland worked with children from P1 to S5 in mixed groups. The team was able to get in to deliver face to face work because the teachers at the local primaries had good relationships and communication with Sistema Scotland, knew that they would be capable of high quality delivery and were confident that the risk assessment produced was very thorough.

“ It was also down to the communication with the Sistema Scotland staff. They are very engaging, they always communicate what is going well and any problems, and are very flexible. ”

- Teacher -

Working in the hub was the first time they had been back doing face to face work, and it was underpinned by strong protocols and risk assessments. Sistema Scotland as an organisation reviewed all the relevant guidance, talked about it as a team, explored key issues with the Director of Education and the two schools, and also discussed issues at key national groups such as the Music Education Partnership Group (MPEG) and Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland (HITS). It was challenging to interpret the guidance, as Sistema covered a number of different types of provision. It was a good opportunity to try what worked in lessons and build confidence in the new delivery model.



“ We are not really one thing, you know. We are childcare, we are education, but we’re playing music so it becomes creative arts as well.. ”

- **Sistema** -

Over the summer holidays, Sistema Scotland then began chatting with the two primary schools about getting back to face to face delivery from when the schools returned in autumn 2020. The plans changed quickly, based on the circumstances. Sistema Scotland shared its risk assessments and protocols with the schools, and the schools shared theirs with Sistema Scotland. Ultimately, Sistema Scotland followed whatever policies and protocols the schools had in place, when working with their pupils. This included no mixing between schools or class groups, and no moving the class out of their classroom (during class time).

Face to face delivery resumed in class in September 2020, with the after-school club returning two weeks later. For the first few weeks of term, the school wanted to focus on the pupils and not allow any visitors at all. The early years work did not re-start due to a policy of having no external visitors at nurseries in the authority. The work with P1 and P2 pupils, which focuses on rhythm and pre-instrumental skills, is not very different from before.

The biggest change is that there is no singing. But the protocol Sistema adopted is that children need to socially distance when they are holding an instrument (based on their interpretation of the guidelines). This causes challenges for the P3 group. It means that playing the violin and viola has not been recommenced with this group, as they can't be moved out of their classroom and space does not allow for distancing.



Other key considerations include:

- The Sistema teacher distances from the children, and from the class teacher
- The Sistema teacher wears a mask unless directly teaching the children
- Sistema teachers work with one school per day and a maximum of two groups per day
- Equipment is wiped down (or quarantined) after use
- Equipment is not passed between pupils.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Sistema Scotland provides opportunities to play as an orchestra, but it is a social programme at heart. Its focus is on strengthening communities and building confident, happy young people. Independent evaluation has shown that Big Noise fosters confidence, develops teamwork, builds resilience and promotes aspiration in the children and young people who take part.

Feedback from four children taking part in Big Noise highlighted that it made them feel happy and connected to others.

Some children said they felt more confident now, and the teacher agreed.

Some children also said that Big Noise helped them to manage their moods, health and energy.



“ Big Noise makes me feel happy. Sometimes I’m lonely but I’m never lonely at Big Noise. ”

- Child -

“ My confidence is better now most of the time. ”

- Child -

“ I think it has had a big impact on their confidence and their enjoyment of being back to school. ”

- Teacher -



The children felt they had learned to play the violin and learned more about music. Staff felt that Big Noise could also help with language, words and numbers, and supports children's wider educational development. One of the children mentioned enjoying school more on the days Big Noise took place.

Big Noise is an important part of the school. Being back in schools delivering face to face learning provided a sense of something like normal for the children, which was much needed. Taking part also provides children with a safe, warm space and snacks - which children highly valued. Children noticed that the sessions felt a little different now, since restrictions came into place.

“ Big Noise gives me more energy and it helps my mum when I come home because I am more calm.

- Child - ”

“ Big Noise makes me feel well.

- Child - ”

“ It feels different now. We used to have more food and we used to sit closer together. ”

- Child - ”

LEARNING

A key reason that the work was able to go ahead was because of positivity and support from the Director of Education and the head teachers within the schools. Sistema Scotland already had a good relationship and was a trusted organisation, and this made a big difference.

“ In this authority it is very much down to head teacher discretion, as long as the guidelines are being met. We are lucky that the head teacher is very comfortable with visitors as long as we are made fully aware of relevant risk assessments. ”

- Sistema -

Big Noise is delivered in four areas across Scotland. Staff in Douglas found it useful to share ideas and confirm interpretations of guidelines and risks across the organisation, and this helped build confidence in their approach locally.

The pre-recorded lessons worked well for the school pupils, and on reflection Sistema Scotland would have done more of these, earlier on.

Sistema tried hard to focus on what they could do - not just what they could not. Online lessons are not always as good as face to face lessons, but they are better than no lesson at all. While child protection and safeguarding are important considerations, these would need to be thought through in all instances - whether online or face to face - so it is important to think deeply about risk and look beyond initial perceptions.



**BIG NOISE DOUGLAS
SISTEMA SCOTLAND**

BUFF AND SHEEN, MOONSLIDE, IMAGINATE

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 6



Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Buff and Sheen tour involves a live performance delivered to children with additional support needs. Buff and Sheen by Alex McCabe and Suzi Cunningham of MoonSlide, was designed as a performance for children to view through a window. It was designed so that children who were shielding or had additional support needs could be indoors, viewing a performance which was outdoors.



The tour and key phases of research and development were initially funded through the Imagine Ideas Fund. Imagine promotes, develops and celebrates theatre and dance for children and young people across Scotland. In spring 2020, Imagine called for applications to an Ideas Fund. This was a special one-off project in response to Covid-19, to develop interesting artist-led ideas and projects for children, families and schools. Artists from MoonSlide applied for funding to work with children and young people who were shielding and were successful.

The initial funding supported MoonSlide to undertake research, produce a trailer and secure partnerships with other organisations including Edinburgh Dance Base, for the Edinburgh based work. The partnership then applied to Creative Scotland for further funding to continue the work and was successful.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Initially, Buff and Sheen was to be delivered to the homes of children who were shielding during spring 2020. However, it took longer than anticipated to get the live performance up and running, due to strict lockdown restrictions at the time. Having explored delivery in school playgrounds, which wasn't possible in autumn 2020, the project reverted to delivery in gardens and began performances in November 2020.

A producer was appointed to oversee delivery and ensure the performances took account of all relevant guidelines and restrictions. Performances were made in the gardens of four families over two days in November 2020, with families viewing the performance through the windows. Each performance lasted approximately 20 minutes and was delivered free of charge. Further touring has been flexibly scheduled Feb-Spring 2021.



The performance was designed to be fully compliant with all guidelines at that time.

This included:

- The stage manager visited the garden 10 minutes before each performance, to clean the area and deliver a sanitised Bluetooth speaker to the house, without entering the home.
- The stage manager left as the performers arrived, to reduce the number of people in attendance.
- The two performers became a single household, to allow close contact.
- All staff lived in Edinburgh and all performances were within the Edinburgh authority.
- The producer did not attend the sessions to reduce the number of people in the garden.
- Families were given clear written information about what to expect in advance of the session, and could call or email with any questions.
- Families were provided with a copy of the risk assessment in advance, for their information.
- Performers supplied their own costume and laundered their own clothes at the end of each day.
- Windows remained closed during the show.



The company ensured that all performances complied with the Scottish Government guidance on youth arts. The artists and producer also worked to ensure that the performances were as safe as possible, beyond the required restrictions and guidelines. They carefully considered each aspect of the set up and performance, and worked to ensure that it was delivered as safely as possible.

The producer and artists also talked to other creative organisations about their approaches to small live performance sessions. This helped to build confidence and understand the detail of exactly how different elements of delivery would work. Organisations were very open to sharing their thoughts, and having conversations about how to interpret and implement the guidelines in a live performance setting.

“ Going to visit families in that way, in their gardens, worked really well. ”
- **Imagine** -

The performances were often a surprise for the children. To keep the element of surprise, the stage manager arrived in plain clothes and the artists arrived afterwards.

“ The children then had the magic of the performers arriving. ”
- **Imagine** -



IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The four performances in November 2020 involved families connected with three different schools for children with additional support needs.

Families received information about the performance through their school and contacted Buff and Sheen directly to arrange a performance. Families were included on a first come first served basis.

Being able to perform live for the families was a joy. Live performance, like so many things, is something people had got used to not having in their lives. The families rated the performance very highly, and felt happy and joyful during the performance.

“ Fantastic, happiness, entertaining! ”

“ Fun, engaging, special! ”

“ Fun, laughter all round, excitement! ”

“ The children were very engaged, they watched the whole performance and were interacting through the windows. ”

- Parents -

LEARNING

Demand was managed on a first come first served basis. The invitation was sent to all schools for children with additional support needs in Edinburgh. The producer has a waiting list of children who will be booked in for performance in February 2021. However, the producer has learned not to book families in for firm dates more than a couple of weeks in advance, as the restrictions and rules can change so quickly in the current environment. This is quite different to normal circumstances, when this type of performance would be booked well in advance.

The Buff and Sheen performance can be delivered safely and in a way that families enjoy in its current format. This gives the artists a strong basis to build on. By February, the performance can continue in its current format, or can be adapted dependent on the restrictions in place at that time.

The performance was very much welcomed and enjoyed by families. However, the artists are looking forward to being able to deliver performances to children and young people as a group. The artists feel there is also something very special about a group of children together, in a relaxed and happy environment, seeing a performance with their peers.





**BUFF AND SHEEN,
IMAGINATE**

EXPECTING SOMETHING STARCATCHERS

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 7



Profiling creative work with children and young people in 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Expecting Something project is run by Starcatchers, Scotland's national arts and early years organisation. It has been in operation since 2015 in Lochgelly, Fife. The project works with young parents aged 25 and under and babies aged 0 to 2.

At the time of lockdown in March, the project was scheduled to have a two-week break. Instead of taking this break, Expecting Something went straight into making digital connections, as staff felt it was important to stay connected and be there to support families at this time.

Initially, sessions were also held on Zoom which quickly fizzled out. The project decided to keep an online presence but make it possible for parents and babies to join at a time that suited them. Each week the artists delivered a range of pre-recorded activity videos, Facebook live sessions, and connected one to one with some families to respond to individual needs. The project also provided 'Creative care parcels' with a range of open ended play materials, crafts and plants to grow. The response from families was hugely positive.



They ran Facebook Live Stream sessions, giving examples of activities that parents could do with their babies. In addition, the project provided pre-recorded activities and delivered activity packs.

In May and June 2020, discussion with parents highlighted that they were keen for activity to take place face to face. By July, the project was more confident that face to face sessions would be possible. Outdoor sessions were re-introduced at the start of July.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Normally, the Expecting Something classes ran indoors at a community arts centre. As classes could not take place indoors, the project re-started activity in a local park and outdoors at a local arts centre. To enable this, they purchased a gazebo, handwash stations and table (using emergency funding it was able to access).

At first, Expecting Something ran 20 minute sessions for one family at a time. The next week, they ran sessions with two families - with the adults socially distanced. For one parent, who had a new baby, sessions were held in their garden to reduce the need to travel.

The sessions worked well outdoors. However, it was challenging to find a suitable space that was not too exposed, and the project wanted to build in sustainability for the colder and wetter autumn months.

The project therefore moved to Lochore Meadows, a local beauty spot, in October 2020. The location is in forest surroundings and is sheltered. They purchased firepits, picnic blankets and groundsheets. The use of gazebos is limited to ensure social distancing. On rainy days, the gazebos are not used to discourage people huddling together, and the forest provides some shelter.



The project followed the Scottish Government guidelines. This was challenging as they didn't feel the project fitted into one particular strand of guidance, but spanned a few. Staff chatted to other projects to work through their ideas and approaches. In autumn 2020 the rules around parent and baby groups became much clearer.

Expecting Something decided to limit groups to below what would be allowed within the guidance - at 5 parents and babies. However, it has been exhausting constantly making decisions about the implications of different restriction levels and guidance.

Expecting Something works closely with Fife Gingerbread, which works with young parents. This partnership has grown since lockdown and one session each day is dedicated to parents connected with Fife Gingerbread.

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IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The number of parents and babies attending has grown. More families attended in winter 2020 than before March 2020. It is helping to provide activities for parents with young children who have been isolated during lockdown and are very much looking for things to do. Parents also felt that the sessions helped their children to develop their social skills, interact with other children and meet new people.

Expecting Something staff felt that the new arrangements for the project meant that it was able to achieve more in terms of parent and baby bonding than it did before. It provided the same engaging activities but in really special circumstances and beautiful sceneries for families to experience. This was felt to be more important now than ever and the parents looked forward to it every week.

“ Group has been really amazing and helped me get out the house. ”
- Parent -

“Gave me something to look forward to and a reason to get dressed. ”
- Parent -

“ I absolutely love the sessions! Me and my little boy who is 21 months looked forward to Wednesday mornings each week... ”
- Parent -

Being outside also helped the parents significantly with mental health and wellbeing. The parents loved the outdoor setting, both for themselves and their children.

While a few parents would have liked some shelter for cold and wet days, most enjoyed that it was entirely outdoors. All said that their children liked being outside whatever the weather.

The project also found that the group changed from being almost all mums and babies, to more dads being involved. The staff think that the outdoor and woodland setting may have helped to attract dads to the group.

Most parents mentioned that they liked that the sessions were smaller (in groups of up to 5) as they got more out of the sessions and found it easier to take part fully. Although the groups were smaller, the parents have still bonded and made connections.

“ It’s fun and my 11 month old loves it, she can get dirty and just have fun! ”
- **Parent** -

“ I think it’s great being outdoors! What kids should be doing. ”
- **Parent** -

“ I love the location in the wood with all the nature. ”
- **Parent** -

“ He loves exploring no matter the weather... ”
- **Parent** -

“ Made me meet new mums and feel better about being a mum myself. ”
- **Parent** -

LEARNING

Having a strong online platform really helped to share information about the sessions, how they work and any changes to rules or restrictions. While running the project, staff worked hard to set a good example to families in terms of being mindful of the restrictions. It was an opportunity to remind adults to socially distance and learn how to chat at a two metre distance.

Although the babies were always well dressed for the weather and wrapped up warm, the parents were not. Expecting Something is exploring funding opportunities to provide warm clothing for parents to use at the sessions and more widely.

The project has shifted from being entirely indoors - in a studio with no windows - to entirely outdoors. Although the project moved outdoors because of Covid-19, it has plans for the future to continue working outdoors as much as possible because the sessions work so well.

Expecting Something has learned that face to face activity outdoors is more impactful and enjoyable than live Zoom sessions, which did not work particularly well for this client group as necessity to be on screen in real time is not conducive to maintaining a child led approach or allowing for parent and baby connection.

It has been more difficult to get people with the tiniest of babies involved in the outdoor work, particularly in the colder weather. However, the project is working on communicating that there is lots that you can do outdoors with a baby that is only weeks old, and more parents of very young children are now attending.



“ We love it! We prefer it to before. ”

- Parent -



**EXPECTING SOMETHING
STARCATCHERS**



BABY STRINGS CREATE4EAST

Creativity during Covid: Case Study 8
Profiling creative work with children and
young people in 2020, during the Covid-19
global pandemic

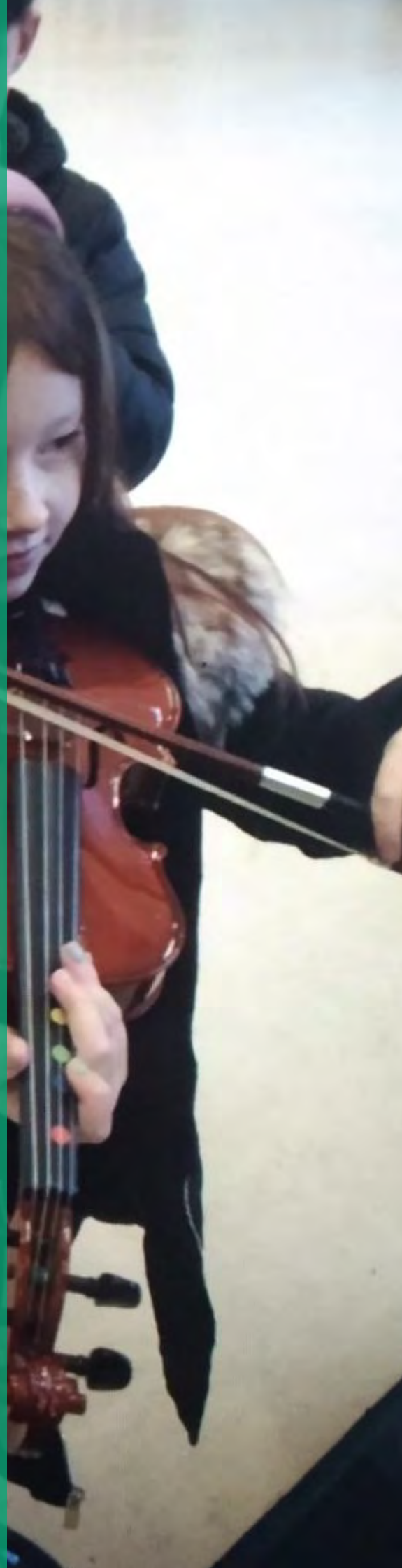
ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Baby Strings is a whole class string project for P1 to P4 pupils. It is delivered in Eastbank learning community, which brings together four primary schools. The project was first developed in September 2017, funded through the Pupil Equity Fund. The funding was used to buy stringed instruments and hire music tutors.

The project is delivered by CREATE Instrumental Music Service (part of Glasgow City Council's Education Services). The project was designed collaboratively with schools, pupils and families.

As well as aligning with the Pupil Equity Fund aims to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap, the project aims to bring the learning community together and provide an exciting and transformative experience for pupils and families. Class teachers are involved in Continuing Professional Development sessions, and have been trained to deliver elements of the music sessions.

The project has developed over the past four years, with increased opportunities to learn and perform. Pupils who wish to can further develop their skills through the Instrumental Music Service, and other integrated music opportunities within the learning community. Pupils have performed in prominent venues and high profile events across the city, including the City Halls, City Chambers and Royal Concert Hall.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

When the schools closed at the end of March 2020, the Baby Strings project ceased its in-school delivery. The project continued engagement digitally.

Each Baby Strings tutor took responsibility for developing weekly videos for a different year group. The videos were designed to be 'classroom friendly' and accessible to teachers, parents and carers without music expertise, for example, not using technical jargon or terms that parents might not understand. The tutors also developed a resource pack, with details of the skills and activities that pupils could do at home.

The videos and resource packs were disseminated to teachers at all four schools. The class teachers then shared them with pupils via a range of online platforms including Microsoft Teams, Google Classrooms, SeeSaw and Showbie.

“ We had to plan a lot more, I think...but it was fine, it was good. ”

- Baby Strings Tutor -

Some tutors also supported schools more broadly, by assisting in the Hub schools, which were still open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. Although the tutors were not able to deliver the project, they were able to maintain some face-to-face contact with the most vulnerable pupils.

Although the videos and online resources were useful for schools, many pupils were in very disadvantaged areas and had barriers to online learning. The schools - and pupils - were keen to start face to face delivery as soon as possible. From June 2020, the partners planned for restarting in the autumn term.

In the main, the project has recommenced with minimal changes to its delivery plan. Initially the project restarted with tutors visiting two schools per week, on a rotation. As it was working well, this has now increased and music tutors are able to visit up to five schools per week.

To help the project get re-started:

- The process has been extensively risk assessed by the local authority to ensure that guidelines were understood and adhered to.
- The schools are invested in trying to make the project work.
- The tutors were people who had attended the school previously and were seen as school staff.
- The schools were able to provide a large enough space (usually the gym hall) for the activity to meet physical distancing guidelines.

The key things they have had to take into consideration are around increased hygiene measures and no singing. All the instruments are cleaned thoroughly between the sessions. This takes around 15-20 minutes, but has been a manageable adjustment.

Under the current guidelines they are not allowed to do group singing. This aspect of the project has been replaced with more rhythm based activities or playing the instruments more. They have also tried spoken word and rap activities which allow the pupils to exercise their voices within the parameters of the guidelines.

“ The schools, because they pay for it out of their own PEF money, they are invested in this, hugely, so they want it to work. ”

- Local Authority Lead-

“ ...we've been trying to do melody things through playing instead of singing, so I would play something on my violin or we play them a piece of music, so they still get that aural connection...but the kids are still really enjoying it and they're still engaging which is really important. ”

- Baby Strings Tutor -



The project has also been able to continue CPD sessions for class teachers and will be putting on a concert – all through online delivery and collation of audio recordings.

The main difference in delivery is that there aren't opportunities for parental involvement at the moment. However teachers are sharing information with parents through the Seesaw app. They have also applied for connectivity support and have extra resources and WiFi for pupils that couldn't access it.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The project has had a high level of engagement from pupils. The four participating schools used the Leuven scale to explore levels of engagement from pupils during the sessions. This involves observing the students and exploring how engaged they are with activities. Across the schools, engagement measured through the Leuven scale was between 90-95%.

Pupils we spoke with indicated that they enjoyed taking part in the project, and that it improved their sense of well being.

Partners and pupils noted that pupils were very keen to start playing their instruments again, after being off from March until August 2020.

“ I like when we play songs and do warm ups. ”
- Pupil -

“ I feel really excited and happy. ”
- Pupil -

“ We were off for ages and I missed it. ”
- Pupil -



Through the project, the pupils benefited from a range of technical music skills and personal development. Project partners felt that there were a range of benefits for pupils including improved listening and communication skills, goal setting, resilience and development of a growth mind set.

In particular, one partner noted that the project has allowed children from four schools to communicate using the shared language of music.

One head teacher commented that the pupils from the first cohort in 2017 are now very confident P5 pupils. A tutor also felt that the pupils involved in Baby Strings demonstrate wider skills, such as team work and conscientiousness. For example in one class, pupils were very attentive and supportive of a new pupil, who had not played a stringed instrument before.

“ I just love it when like we do strings and we finally get it right! ”
- Pupil -

“ I feel relief that I finally get it right. ”
- Pupil -

“ We learned the music alphabet. ”
- Pupil -

“ I think it's made them focus a lot more and they're much more socially aware as well. ”
- Baby Strings Tutor -

“ It's really lovely to see the kids just working together like that. ”
- Baby Strings Tutor -

One partner noted that these changes were evident in the way that very young pupils were able to sit still and listen to classical music, or to sit through assemblies quietly and attentively.

“ We’re talking about some kids that normally wouldn’t sit still for five minutes...but as soon as they’re in their music, they’re brilliant. ”

- Local Authority Lead-

CREATE has monitored the progress of pupils and found that almost all demonstrated increased achievement and attainment in all areas measured.

“ We’ve been doing all the assessment...the results are quite phenomenal. ”

- Local Authority Lead-

Schools also looked at how the project has affected attainment in literacy and numeracy. One head teacher felt the project contributed to improvements, although they noted that it was difficult to directly attribute improvements to one project, when there are so many initiatives in each school.



LEARNING

Partners felt that the main learning from the project was around planning, communication and flexibility. They felt that taking time from June to August 2020 to plan how the project would be amended to meet guidelines, allowed them to develop a successful project delivery model, despite the challenges.

Partners also noted that it was important to continually learn and adjust the project, both over time and for each class. Although planning was an important success factor, they felt that plans should be flexible and that the project needed to be dynamic and adaptable.

Partners also felt that communication and engagement with parents and carers was important. In particular, they noted that the concerts are a very positive experience for parents. In 2020, online concerts were produced instead of live concerts, to engage families in the project.

“The main thing is just planning. We’ve had to discuss with lots of people, make sure we’re sticking to the guidelines, make sure everyone involved knows what’s going on.”

- **Baby Strings Tutor** -

“Every class is different, so you kind of always have to adapt. And plan – planning is very important! Planning and then being able to say, oh that didn’t work, let’s try it a different way.”

- **Baby Strings Tutor** -

“For me, I think it’s a transformative thing, the whole project.”

- **Head teacher** -



**BABY STRINGS
CREATE4EAST**