

# EALING MUSIC THERAPY



ealing  
music  
therapy

ANNUAL REPORT  
2023-2024



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# ABOUT

Established in 1989, Ealing Music Therapy is an independent charity providing life-changing Music Therapy to children and young people in schools across the London Borough of Ealing. This year we provided tailored Music Therapy services to five schools in the Borough, benefiting over 70 children and young people with additional needs.

Music Therapy is a well-researched and powerful clinical intervention which uses music creatively to form a therapeutic relationship. It can help improve attention and awareness, manage anxiety and behaviours that challenge, develop social and communication skills, help the bereavement process and much more. It also provides a safe outlet where children and young people can express and deal with difficult emotions.

Our four HCPC Registered Music Therapists support pupils with a range of challenges and diagnoses, including Autism and Learning Difficulties. Music Therapy helps them overcome difficulties and develop valuable life skills, enabling them to reach their full potential. The universal language of music makes the therapeutic process accessible to children and young people from diverse cultures and languages.

Our vision is to continue to expand, meeting the needs of all children and young people in the Borough who could benefit from our support by 2030. According to recent research, this is over 800 individuals.

**“Music Therapy has enabled pupils to develop a positive relationship and interactions with their therapy partner, increase vocalisations, gain confidence, and develop some stability with their emotional and physical wellbeing.”**

Mundrika Bhanderi

Assistant Head Teacher, Mandeville School.



# THE TEAM

## Music Therapists

- Gemma Lenton-Smith, Clinical Lead and Operations Manager
- Omer Plotniarz, Music Therapist
- Gemma Shiffner, Music Therapist
- Robert Simonis, Music Therapist

Our Therapists are highly experienced professionals, trained to Masters Degree level in Music Therapy and registered with the HCPC (The Health and Care Professions Council). They are responsible to the Board of Trustees of Ealing Music Therapy. They receive regular support and supervision, both on a day-to-day basis and at a clinical level.

## Music Therapy Assistant

Rebecca Gleave joined Ealing Music Therapy as a Music Therapy Assistant in September 2023. Rebecca provides marketing and administrative support to the Board of Trustees and supports our Music Therapists in school. This year she has worked at Belvue and Mandeville Schools where she provided musical and administrative assistance to our therapy team and ran her first nursery music group.

## Trustees

Santosh Bhanot, Walid El-Yafi, Colin Lenton-Smith, Saz Vora, Rachael Nolan and Cidalia Mendes.

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

At Ealing Music Therapy, we strive to support children & young people (C&YP) who have additional needs. For over 35 years, we have developed and validated Music Therapy as a clinical intervention, proudly supporting pupils in schools across the London Borough of Ealing. Working as an integral part of the school and alongside the school's dedicated staff and multidisciplinary teams, a bespoke Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is carefully developed so that pupils can be provided with the best opportunities to engage within the school and, importantly, life outside with their families, friends and communities. **This investment is for life.**

It is estimated that 15-20% of C&YP in the UK are Neurodivergent. This means that their brains develop and function differently from those considered Neurotypical. Neurodivergent pupils face significant challenges which can present through a range of behaviours including emotional, social and communication issues. Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD and certain Learning Difficulties fall into this category. Data from research carried out in Ealing shows a 12% increase in Autism per annum\*. **At Ealing Music Therapy, we believe it is vital to support these pupils urgently.**

Over the last two years, and against the backdrop of the UN Sustainable Development Goal for Quality Education (to ensure equal access to all levels of education for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and children in vulnerable situations), we have built our **ambitious vision to provide Music Therapy to 850 C&YP annually \*\* across the Borough of Ealing.**

This year, we made strides to advance our goal to expand, significantly increasing our funding to develop our new



Operational Capacity. This has enabled us to recruit a much-needed Music Therapy Assistant and an Operations Manager, creating an Operations Team.

**Over the Summer, we held our annual strategy workshop. This enabled us to make significant headway with a plan to move forward, increase our growth and build awareness of how Music Therapy can support more C&YP. We are actively pursuing our lead idea, the development of a Saturday Service.**

We continue to provide Music Therapy Services as partners to our long-standing schools (Mandeville, Belvue, St Ann's and Springhallow). We are also now in our second year at Selborne Primary School. Reporting from the schools on the benefits of Music Therapy has been excellent, with one Assistant Head commenting on Group Music Therapy - "(you are able to) **'Find your Voice' in a Music Therapy group that provides a safe and predictable environment (and allows pupils) to explore and develop their communication skills. This (has) enabled pupils to develop their observation and awareness of one another, explore singing and grow in confidence.**" Yet, our schools are struggling and facing difficult budget constraints, with two schools having to discontinue as they were unable to continue to fund Music Therapy.

At Ealing Music Therapy we have a small, expert Therapist team who I am hugely grateful for. Our Music Therapists are committed and passionate in providing supportive Music Therapy in schools, with Gemma Lenton-Smith, our highly experienced Senior Therapist, providing solid leadership and guidance to the team, along with therapists Omer Plotniarz, Gemma Schiffner and Robert Simonis. You can find summaries of their work in this report which provide insight into their day to day support.

Excitingly, we also now have our new Operations Team, a significant milestone achievement. Gemma Lenton-Smith has taken on the additional post of Operations Manager, working on our expansion plans including the research behind

Our Saturday Service. Rebecca Gleave, in the role of MusicTherapy Assistant, has made fantastic headway on delivering our communications plans and working on our first promotional video.

I'd like to thank Colin Lenton-Smith for his role as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Colin has dedicated many hours working with myself on our expansion plans, building our finances, governance and strategic growth. Thanks also to the Board of Trustees who continue to provide excellent steering as we realise our plans: Saz Vora, also working on Communications, Walid El-Yafi, Cidalia Mendes and Rachael Nolan.

Thanks to the support of John Lyons, our Operations Team is now up and running. I am grateful for funds from Postlethwaite Music Fund, Ealing Co-op (whose members have selected Ealing Music Therapy as its charity) and Pathways for their continued support. These funds have enabled us to develop outreach plans and engage with supporters and stakeholders to help realise our vision.

Thank you to Bhanot & Co. Chartered Accountants for accounts, Young Ealing Foundation for their ongoing support, and our Marketing Consultant, Harsh Taneja, for her exceptional skills in navigating us towards a comprehensive expansion plan in our second strategic workshop, enabling us to move forward with our goals. **Thank you for supporting Ealing Music Therapy and investing in the children and young people of Ealing so that they may have the best start in life.**

**SANTOSH BHANOT, PHD, FRSA**  
**CHAIRPERSON**

\*JSNA 2017: Autistic Spectrum Disorders (All Ages), Sue Graham et al. \*\*The Ealing Borough Council SEN School Census, January 2018 Report.





# OPERATIONS MANAGER'S REPORT

I have been delighted to undertake the Operations Manager role, one day a week, as part of Ealing Music Therapy's Operations Management Team since November 2023. It has allowed me the time and opportunity to support the charity in putting in place systematic procedures as well as looking to develop and implement its strategic plans.

This year I have edited and written policies and procedures for the charity including appraisal, health and safety, privacy, risk assessment, code of conduct, and equality, diversity and inclusion, keeping them up to date with our everyday procedures.

As part of my role this year, I have been able to plan and execute elements of our strategy through networking with other charities and area groups such as Young Ealing Foundation and the Children and Young People Practitioner Forum hosted at Brentford FC Stadium. This has enabled further support for our charity as well as providing useful links to develop the charity further. I was also pleased to attend the 'Impact Measurement Masterclass' run by Young Ealing Foundation. This was helpful in providing an awareness of different tools that could be used to measure the impact of our service. This also potentially offers useful information to enable us to support funding grants.

To develop our strategy to expand Music Therapy services, enabling more children to access Music Therapy, I have joined the Operations Team in meetings with education providers and other charities with the aim of exploring partnership

opportunities. This included conversations with Log Cabin on how we might work together to carry out a holiday scheme. A proposal was written and submitted but, due to challenges with their funding, we couldn't progress this year. We will continue to liaise with Log Cabin over the next year to see if we can be more successful in finding funding to support and put into place a holiday scheme during the next Summer holidays.

With Springhallow School, I also investigated the possibility of extending our services to the post-16 provision. Again, funding cuts within the education services mean it is challenging for schools to buy in any further services than they currently have.

I have also been involved in networking with local universities including the University of West London. A valuable meeting with Professor McKay and our Operations Team looked into pursuing opportunities of collaborative research projects using Music Therapy data. This could support the organisation in creating impact research. Furthermore, the possibility of lecturing music students about Music Therapy would give them knowledge of alternative career options within the music industry.

With difficulties in education budgets, we have been looking at alternative ways to provide Music Therapy services that do not rely solely on the school environment. I have been part of the initial stages of looking to create a Saturday Music Therapy Service within the Borough. In preparation, I visited a number of venues to help find an appropriate space for the Service. One of the venues of interest was Parkside Yards in Southall and we were excited to be invited to be part of their community event on 3 August. This was an opportunity for charities and organisations to showcase their services to families in the Southall area. Our aim for the event was to build general awareness of Ealing Music Therapy in the Southall community, test interest, assess whether parents in the area want Music Therapy for their children, and gather contact details of parents on the day by creating appropriate documentation and resources.



The event was a success in gaining a growing waiting list for the service, with over 20 families expressing interest.

Finally, we were approached by a local GP Trainer who requested that we provide a workshop to develop GPs' understanding of Music Therapy. I created and submitted a proposal to the trainer for them to decide whether this is something that would be useful for them. We are awaiting their decision on this. If it is successful, the workshop will be carried out with members of the Music Therapy team in 2025. In providing workshops to professionals and external organisations, we will be able to showcase the skill set we have whilst creating an income that can go towards supporting further Music Therapy projects and resources.

**GEMMA LENTON-SMITH**  
**OPERATIONS MANAGER**

# MUSIC THERAPY ASSISTANT'S REPORT

I have been in role as Ealing Music Therapy's Music Therapy Assistant since September 2003 and have enjoyed a very productive year, with lots of exciting developments taking place within the charity. As well as assisting our Music Therapists Team one day a week, I also work for the Board of Trustees one day a week in a marketing and administrative role.

Working with the Board of Trustees, I have developed a contacts list of over 100 key contacts and I have set up a Mailchimp account where it can be stored securely in line with GDPR. In February 2024 I sent out our first marketing communication to councillors and schools, introducing the charity and including our Annual Report.

I have developed a new suite of marketing materials including an Annual Report template, leaflets, contact cards, roller banners, promotional gifts and event materials. I have also worked with our website developer to renew the website's security certificate and have improved our site navigation.

I worked with our Trustees and Therapists to put together an application for the Young Ealing Foundation Awards, leading to Ealing Music Therapy being shortlisted for the Mental Wellbeing Project of the Year.

I helped organise and staff the Ealing Music Therapy stand at Parkside Yards' Summer Community Day which resulted in 22 online queries about our services, including 14 registrations for our proposed Saturday Service.



I have planned two marketing campaigns, one of which will promote our Saturday Service and the other will inform parents as to how to access Music Therapy services within school.

In August I set up a Facebook page for Ealing Music Therapy which now has 41 followers. I am planning to develop our social media over the next year.

## **Belvue School & Mandeville School**

During my first term, I assisted Music Therapist Omer Plotniarz on Mondays at Belvue School. I contributed to group therapy sessions with three teenage girls who had been referred to Music Therapy with the aim of developing self-esteem, confidence, social and communication skills. I joined in with the musical activities and turn-taking games that Omer had devised for the girls, providing musical support by playing conga and small percussion instruments. I watched the girls' confidence, attention and engagement improve as the sessions progressed. I also observed the girls using the instruments and their voices to express themselves.

In the afternoons, I contributed to individual therapy sessions with a teenage boy who had been referred to Music Therapy with the aim of reducing anxiety and improving attention. The young person often used drums in the session to express his emotions. I helped support and encourage this by also playing drums and participating in the call and response activities Omer had introduced.

I also provided practical support for the sessions such as helping to set up the room and tidy up afterwards.

In the Spring and Summer terms of 2024, I assisted Senior Music Therapist Gemma Lenton-Smith on Mondays at Mandeville School. I assisted in Gemma's individual therapy sessions with a non-speaking young boy with Autism. I accompanied Gemma and the child's improvisations with violin lines, bringing a new sound and musical texture into the room

for the child to explore. At the beginning of the Spring term, the child was finding it difficult to stay in the room for the whole session. I provided support by sitting by the door and encouraging him to stay in the therapy room. As the sessions progressed, the child became comfortable with the room and with us, he built a rapport with me and began to experiment a lot with the instruments and his voice. By the end of the series of sessions, he was able to self-regulate and was no longer becoming agitated towards the end of the session.

In the afternoons, I ran a nursery music group for 7 children with a range of additional needs and Autism. The aim was to engage the children and help support the development of their attention skills. I sang and played a series of songs which had props and actions, and encouraged the children to join in. The children also had opportunities to play with the guitar, ukulele and swanny whistles. Towards the end of our series of sessions, we started to incorporate sensory play for the children who had sensory needs. By the end of the second term, there were marked improvements in the children's attention, with all children staying until the end of the sessions and engaging with the instruments, and half of the children singing along to the songs. Even the children with more complex needs were participating.

**REBECCA GLEAVE**  
**MUSIC THERAPY ASSISTANT**



# IMPACT REPORT



## Ealing Music Therapy Case Study

One of the children who received therapy through our service was John, a 9-year-old boy with Autism. He who had difficulties communicating and regulating his emotions.

Before therapy, he found changes extremely upsetting. As a result, he experienced anxiety and displayed extreme aggression towards himself

and others. He often scratched, hit and spat.

After receiving Music Therapy from one of our Therapists, John's teacher and parents noticed that his aggressive outbursts lessened significantly. Music allowed John to express and share his emotions. It also helped him to realise that he didn't need words to communicate.

Music Therapy made it possible for John to connect and form meaningful relationships, to be heard, acknowledged and valued. For John, this was a life-changing experience.

## IMPACT

73

Pupils benefited.

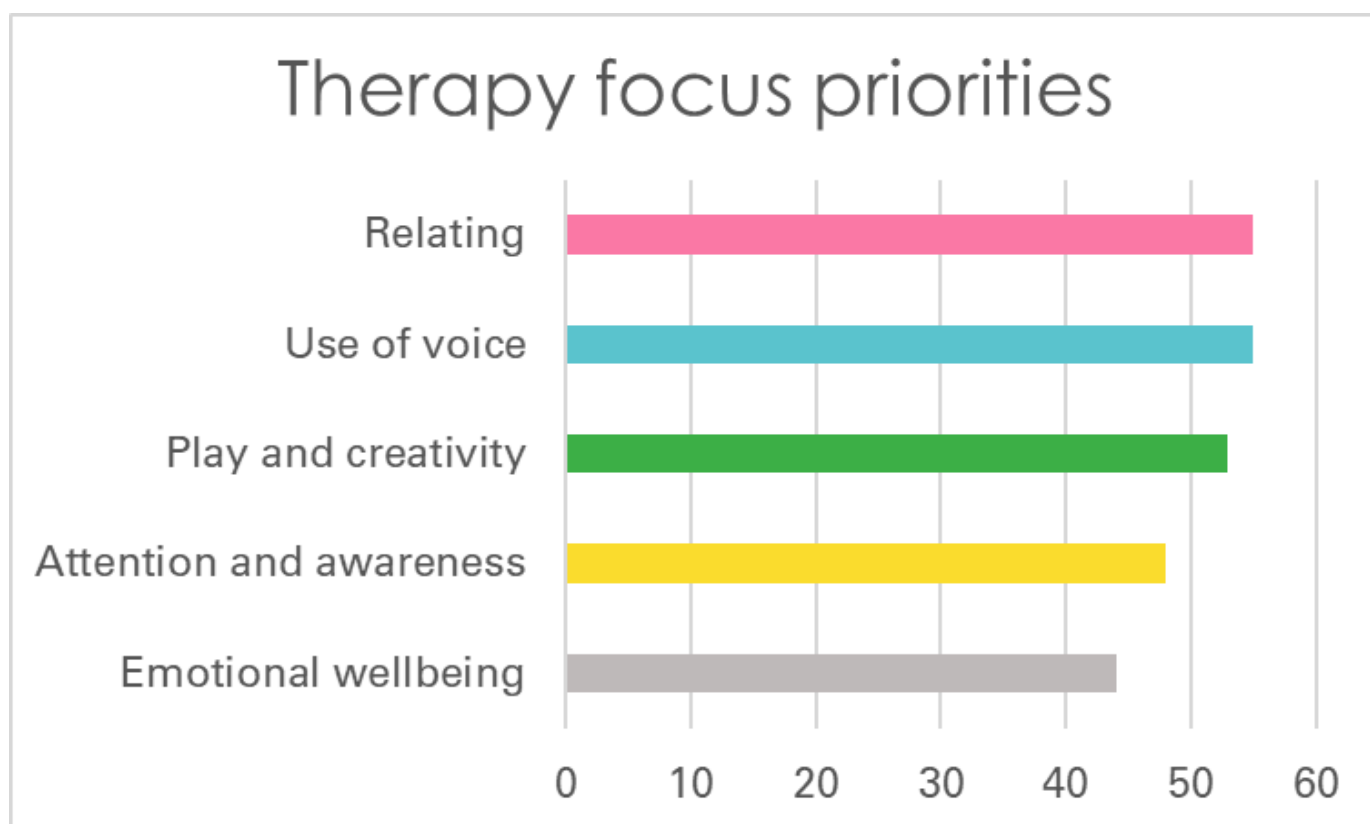
42

Therapy groups + individual therapy programmes provided.

5

Ealing schools supported.

This year, the children and young people we supported required therapy which focused on the following priority areas...





Therapy outcomes for the pupils included improvements in the following areas...



# THERAPISTS' REPORT

## **Belvue School**

**Belvue School is a Secondary School for students with a range of learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and Autism.**

**For many years, Music Therapy has been an integral part of the school's landscape and is part of the school's multi-disciplinary team. The Music Therapy provision offered by Ealing Music Therapy includes individual, group and spontaneous sessions that include staff members that support the setting when needed.**

The children in the school have been referred to Music Therapy with various aims in mind, such as supporting their emotional wellbeing and developing their social and communication skills, as well as increasing their self-esteem and sense of achievement.

Belvue School consists of two sites - the main school building and its outreach provision - Ken Acock - which caters for the forthcoming year 7s. The Music Therapy provision provided by Ealing Music Therapy is offered to both of the sites.

Within the work in the main school building, eight students received individual Music Therapy sessions, as well as a small group of three students that I ran alongside Rebecca, our Music Therapy Assistant.

The diagnosis of the students receiving Music Therapy included



Autism, Severe and Mild Learning Difficulties, ADHD, emotional challenges and behaviours that challenge. Moreover, the students are coming from different ethnic backgrounds and, for some, English is their second language.

The work at the Ken Acock site was slightly different this year. As the school had a large number of new students in year 7, the school placed them in the outreach building. To support with their transition and group cohesion, I ran four class-based groups (33 students). This also allowed me to gain more knowledge of the students and their needs, and find potential referrals who will benefit from Music Therapy provision. The sessions were based on turn-taking and free improvisation, and allowed the students a fun and safe space to form relationships with their new peers.

Then, with the staff's support, I have formed my caseload which, over the academic year, included eight individual sessions and a group of six students that was focused on social interaction. An important aspect of my work this year was collaborating with staff and other professionals. I did close work with teachers to explain and provide more knowledge about Music Therapy and some activities and strategies they could use to support the students. I also provided online support for one of the students who refused to attend school in person.

I also advised the school's Occupational Therapy Assistant on some ideas for how to interact and engage with a specific student.

I was fortunate to have the experience of working alongside Rebecca as my Music Therapy Assistant and would like to thank her for the hard work.

**OMER PLOTNIARZ**  
**MUSIC THERAPIST**

## Mandeville School

**Mandeville is an LEA-maintained primary day community special school for pupils with Severe and Profound Learning Difficulties. Children at the school may also have Autism or additional physical medical and/or sensory disabilities.**

**The pupils come from a wide variety of cultural and social backgrounds. The school accommodates children aged between 3 and 11 years old and is split into two sections; Autism provision and Severe Learning Disabilities/Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (SLD/PMLD) provision.**

Models of music service delivery: Group, pair-work and one-to-one sessions.

Music Therapy is part of the multi-disciplinary team which includes three part-time Paediatric Occupational Therapist, one part-time Psychologist, two Paediatric Physiotherapists and an Assistant, three part-time Education and Dysphasia Speech and Language Therapists, and an Educational Social Worker.

Some individual Music Therapy programmes work alongside Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Therapy targets. This enables development of motor planning skills, sensory regulation, communication and social skills, linking in with Individual Education Plan goals. As part of the Music Therapy provision, reports are provided after the initial assessment period, for Annual Reviews and at the end of therapy. When possible, the Therapist attends Annual Reviews to report on the progress of the child within the Music Therapy setting.

One-to-one sessions are approximately 30 minutes in length, with group sessions lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. Music



Therapy sessions take place in either the designated therapy room, additional rooms or the classroom depending on the needs of the children or the number of children accessing therapy together. Due to the complex communication, physical needs and socio-emotional stage of development of the children, some pupils may demonstrate challenging behaviours. As a result, therapy sessions can include Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to support the pupils through physical guidance to enable them to express and communicate safely within the therapeutic context. Individual work may focus on supporting the children's needs in different ways including physically, emotionally, socially, communicatively, and supporting sensory and emotional regulation.

As a result of expanding pupil numbers within the school this year, we have had the privilege of providing a three day service at Mandeville school. This has been carried out by two Music Therapists, one working two days of the week and the other working the additional day. Furthermore, during the Spring and Summer terms, our Music Therapy Assistant has supported clinical work with one of the Therapists and provided a music group within the school's early years provision. A Music Therapy trainee from Anglia Ruskin University provided additional clinical work for six months, supporting one individual child and running a short-term group of four pupils.

Over the past academic year, 14 children have received individual Music Therapy intervention. One child in particular has greatly benefited from individual Music Therapy, supporting their emotional regulation and development, and their ability to communicate their emotions to adults around them. Mandeville has seen the benefits for this child and was supportive in putting forward Music Therapy to be in their Education Health Care Plan. This means that Music Therapy is now safeguarded for the children who can benefit from continued sessions when they move to secondary school.

Additionally, group work has included a collaborative Speech and Language, and Music Therapy group named 'Find your

Voice' with seven pupils. This was set up and jointly run over the academic year. The aim of the group was to support children just beginning to find their voice, either using words or vocal sounds. The group supported the children to explore different ways of using their voice, sounds and words to communicate through music, develop choice-making abilities, social awareness and peer relationships.

Furthermore, a friendship and support Music Therapy group with three pupils began during the Spring term. The group was created to develop social interactions, communication and play skills that form the bases for friendships through sharing, turn-taking and listening exercises. During the sessions, the children were able to interact with each other on the drum while the Therapist facilitated this interaction by singing a song describing the two children's actions as well as reflecting the moment. These interactions gave the children the opportunity to develop their social interaction and communication skills together. Listening to songs that they enjoyed was a big part of the group sessions. Members of the group were given the opportunity to choose a number of songs at the start of every session. While the Therapist sang the songs, the children were able to play along with an instrument, move their bodies to the music, or just listen. This gave them a sense of independence in their group and an opportunity for choice-making.

Children from across the school, nursery to year 6, have been able to access the Music Therapy provision this year. They have been referred to Music Therapy this year for a variety of different referral reasons including needing emotional support due to anxiety, changes in school or at home, family illness, challenges with emotional regulation, developing and building positive relationships with others, pre-verbal communication skills, social interaction skills, attention skills and working on peer relationships.

In addition to the Music Therapy clinical work, a choir has been conjointly set up with the Speech and Language Therapist. The aim of the choir was to promote total communication through



Makaton signing, communicative actions, spoken words and choice-making, and to work on singing and signing familiar songs. Part of the choir made its debut as a flash mob at Christmas. Many of the children found this a fantastic opportunity. It was lovely for them to be part of a planned activity in the community which they may not have experienced previously.

A whole school project, named the 'Festival of Flight', was created from the initial development of the choir. The aim of the project was to create an opportunity where as many of the children, if not all, could be part of a festival of talents. This festival allowed the children of Mandeville, as a community, to showcase what they can do. The Deputy Headteacher, the school's poet, the Speech and Language Therapist and myself worked together with teachers to create a day showcasing the children's talents to parents. The choir was one part of the festival where the children had been working on songs linked to flight. The repertoire included 'Three Little Birds', 'Reach for the Stars', 'Firework' and 'Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer'. The idea of the songs was that they would create different points to where the festival would 'travel'. The choir represents the talents the children at Mandeville have which enable them to communicate in different ways. There were added elements during the festival which allowed the children to be as active in the participation as possible, enabling moments of the children being animated spontaneously.

Some of the outcomes of the day included opportunities for the children to be spontaneous in ways that they would not necessarily demonstrate in the classroom, general skills such as transitioning, sharing ideas and objects of interest, moments of free improvised dancing, joining different groups, collaborative play and tolerance of being with others.

Within this academic year, we were asked by Mandeville to provide two days of Music Therapy sessions during their Saturday 'Come and Play' sessions. It was a lovely opportunity to meet and work with some of the parents/carers and siblings

of the children who attend Mandeville School and also children of whom I have not worked with previously. Teaching staff supporting the day took some wonderful photos to showcase the sessions provided.

Mandeville has continued to help and support our continuing professional development, allowing me to attend staff training and courses including relational approaches and safeguarding.

Many thanks to Mandeville School who have very much supported and valued having Music Therapy throughout this year. In particular a special thank you to Mundrika, Assistant Headteacher, who has given her time on a number of occasions to speak on the benefits of Music Therapy in the school to support our charity funding applications.

**GEMMA LENTON-SMITH** & **ROBERT SIMONIS**  
**SENIOR MUSIC THERAPIST** & **MUSIC THERAPIST**





## Selborne Primary School

**Selborne Primary School is a 3 form entry mainstream primary school in the Borough of Ealing. The school also has an Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) which has places for children with Autism, social and communication difficulties, and complex learning difficulties. The children within the ARP have daily opportunities to integrate into the mainstream part of the school with support alongside the specialist teaching in the ARP environment.**

Models of music service delivery: Individual and group sessions (lasting 30-45 minutes, dependant on the child's needs).

It has been fantastic to continue the Music Therapy service for a further year at Selborne Primary School. Music Therapy has been one of the many clinical services bought into the school including Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Clinical Psychology. The Speech and Language Therapist in the ARP works on the same day as the Music Therapist which has given great opportunities for professional discussions and collaboration around working with the children.

This academic year, the children have been referred to Music Therapy due to concerns around emotional, psychological and child protection needs. Referrals are prioritised by the ARP Lead, who is also the ARP Safeguarding Lead, and the Deputy Headteacher, who is also the Designated Child Protection Officer and Inclusion Lead for the mainstream part of the school. Over the past academic year, five pupils from the ARP have received Music Therapy input; one receiving individual therapy, two being in pairwork and the other being in a social and communication group with two other peers in the mainstream provision. Additionally, two further children across the mainstream provision received individual therapy support. The social and communication group supported four children who

had been identified as needing support to develop social skills in order to connect with their peers. Two of the children were in the ARP provision and the group provided an opportunity to integrate two other mainstream children in a small contained group. The group provided opportunities for all the children to develop flexibility in sharing and turn-taking within a group environment. Furthermore, all of the children built confidence in expressing their feelings and ideas through music and words as well as feeling enabled to contribute to group conversations.

The referral reasons at Selborne varied, from child protection concerns and changes to home life, to needs related to developing peer relationships, social and communication difficulties, and preparing for transitioning to high school. Music Therapy has provided a confidential space where the children have been able to express the different emotions they may be experiencing. This has been achieved through the use of the creative medium of music, supported by the Therapist. The children's individual needs are met both musically and emotionally, helping them to process and come to terms with the difficulties they have faced. Each pupil has used the therapy space in different ways, some have used symbolic stories, music-making, songs, improvised music-making and music-based games as part of their process.

Additionally, the service provided transition groups for the two Year 6 classes at the end of the Summer term. The groups provided an opportunity for the pupils to discuss and share with each other their thoughts and feelings of leaving primary school and moving on to high school, as well as creating a class rap song incorporating their thoughts about transition.

Many thanks to Humera and Julie for being so supportive during the two years of Music Therapy service at Selborne School, and in helping it to be such a success. I am sad that funding constraints are impacting on the service continuing for this coming academic year and that this will be my final term at the school. However I have enjoyed working at the school over this period of time and providing support to the children. I



particularly want to thank the ARP team and class teachers who have been so welcoming to me and the service I have provided over the past two years.

**GEMMA LENTON-SMITH**  
**SENIOR MUSIC THERAPIST**

## **Springhallow School**

**Springhallow School is an LEA maintained community special school for pupils aged 4-16 years with a diagnosis of Autism. The pupils at the school have learning disabilities ranging from moderate to severe. The school also has a post-16 site for 16-19 year olds in a separate location.**

Music Therapy provision in Springhallow is one day per week, with five 30-minute sessions of individual and/or group work.

During the 2023-24 academic year, nine pupils received Music Therapy. The pupils have been referred to Music Therapy for support in communication skills, emotional regulation and self-expression. The main focus within the sessions is to build a therapeutic relationship between the pupil and the therapist by attuning to their wants and needs. It is important that the pupil feels safe and secure within the boundaries of the therapy space to allow them to be creative in their play. The sessions usually involve free musical improvisation, song singing, turn-taking exercises and creative play which assist in the social interactions between the pupils and the therapist, as well as creating a platform to allow them to express themselves in different ways. These sessions take place in a large music room provided at Springhallow School.

Over the year, the pupils have shown an improvement in their confidence, emotional wellbeing and overall interaction with me

within the Music Therapy sessions. One pupil I worked with struggled to verbally communicate or express his thoughts and feelings while often speaking at an increased volume or silently mouthing his words. By the end of the year, he was exploring his voice using a microphone connected to different sound effects. He was able to express his voice with controlled improvised vocal sounds and droning notes. He was also able to interact with me through turn-taking on the microphone and making eye contact with me during our vocal interactions.

Additionally, a Music Therapy group with three pupils was created to provide support with engagement, emotional expression, turn-taking, sharing resources with peers and interaction/social engagement with peers. The children participated well in the group by playing together with multiple instruments such as a large drum or ukuleles. They developed good waiting skills during the turn-taking exercises as well as showing a good sense of humour when playing games such as speeding up and slowing down their collective playing. They also showed the ability to listen to each other's requests to slow down or play quieter when required.

The group's favourite activity during their sessions was using the microphone and repeating various phrases they had heard or singing songs into the device. During this exercise, they showed a good response to sharing the microphone with each other and listening to each other's performances on the device.

Springhallow's outreach programmes have helped to support my continuing professional development, allowing me to attend courses such as 'Understanding Pupils on the Autism Spectrum in your Setting' and their annual Springhallow Outreach Autism Conference. I'd like to thank Springhallow school as they continue to value and support Music Therapy throughout the year.

**ROBERT SIMONIS**  
**MUSIC THERAPIST**



## **St Ann's School**

**St Ann's school is a secondary special needs school for young people with complex needs. Many students have a dual diagnosis of Severe Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Condition, or complex medical conditions, severe communication disorders, sensory impairments, or challenging behaviour.**

**St Ann's accommodates young people aged between 11 and 19 years old, with one or two students staying until 21 or 22 years of age if their needs are not able to be met elsewhere.**

We provided one day a week of therapy at the school. Music Therapy is part of the multi-disciplinary team which includes Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy.

Music Therapy is delivered as group or individual sessions, and is often long term, lasting up to one academic year and sometimes beyond. Teaching Assistants often join the Music Therapy sessions, supporting young people who struggle with anxiety and/or challenging behaviour. Therapeutic work may focus on supporting the young people's needs in different ways including physically, emotionally, socially and communicatively.

In the first half of the academic year I was able to see a range of young people for both individual and group work. My individual sessions encompassed work with a young person who was experiencing a turbulent home life, and another who tended to be withdrawn and isolated in class but presented another part of themselves in Music Therapy.

A long term piece of work came to an end, as the young person receiving therapy was consistently doing well in all areas of life. Music Therapy was an important part of this young person's

journey, alongside the support they received from teams at home and in class.

I enjoyed starting work with a young person with sensory and communication needs, and drew on the advice and expertise of my Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy colleagues.

I worked with a group of four young women with PMLD and complex needs. During these sessions, we creatively considered teenage exploration of self, balancing chronological age with a much younger developmental profile.

In January, we welcomed a first-year student from Roehampton University. The student was on placement for two days a week, from January to late June. Being in school two days a week meant our trainee was able to work with two individuals and also co-facilitate a Music Therapy group with me, which felt like a real addition to the amount of therapy we could provide.

In the second half of the academic year, our Music Therapy Trainee completed two fantastic individual pieces of work, supporting two students who made good use of the sessions. Change was seen both within Music Therapy sessions and within the classroom. We also co-facilitated a group with four young women with PMLD and complex needs. Interesting dynamics emerged around gender, with our trainee being the only male in a group that sometimes peaked at seven people (including ourselves and the class Teaching Assistant), and teenage identity, with some group members testing out different roles in the group, including leader, observer and participant.

As we return to school for the Autumn term, I will be continuing with two pieces of individual work; one is a long term piece of work with a looked-after child, the other individual began sessions last term and is making good use of the space, so I am looking forward to seeing how the work develops this year. Having spent a transition morning at Mandeville, I am also looking forward to beginning work with a young person whom



Gemma Lenton-Smith has done fantastic work with, and who we agree will continue to benefit from Music Therapy as she transitions to high school.

St Ann's continues to develop itself, with further building work happening over the Summer holidays and work in progress as we return. This has brought new classroom spaces and refreshed old classrooms, ready for the children who return to school today.

**GEMMA SHIFFNER**  
**MUSIC THERAPIST**

# SENIOR MUSIC THERAPIST'S REPORT

In my role as Senior Music Therapist, I have continued to support our growing Music Therapy Team of four qualified Music Therapists and a Music Therapy Assistant by providing regular managerial and clinical supervision support to them. Additionally, I have chaired and led our team meetings taking place half termly.

This academic year our team worked together to create and then provide a presentation to the Board of Trustees at our Annual Workshop about the use of the Music Therapy Star in clinical practice. This was useful in helping the trustees understand more about the Therapists' work and how we apply the Music Therapy Star in measuring change and progress with the children and young people we work with.

Over the past year we have continued to link in with local universities that have Music Therapy training programmes by providing clinical placements for trainees. We have had two successful placements with trainees from University of Roehampton and Anglia Ruskin University.

I am very grateful to Ealing Music Therapy in fully funding three of the Music Therapy team to attend the British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT) conference in May this year. It was a fantastic opportunity to develop our professional development by participating in workshops and listening to a wide range of presentations based around clinical practice. I also was able to represent Ealing Music Therapy at the Trainee Event hosted at the BAMT conference by giving a brief overview and promoting the work the charity carries out.





Additionally, I am thankful to BAMT and particularly Andrew Langford the Chief Executive who has shared valuable knowledge and experience to support queries and concerns we have in maintaining Music Therapy services in schools. One area in particular has been the understanding of how Music Therapists can support families to have Music Therapy as part of their child's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). I have also attended a few of the BAMT Providers meetings which again have provided opportunities of helpful professional sharing.

**GEMMA LENTON-SMITH**  
**SENIOR MUSIC THERAPIST**

# TREASURER'S REPORT

In the financial year 2023/24 Ealing Music Therapy has provided Music Therapy during the academic year for three days per week at Mandeville School, two days per week at Belvue School and one day per week at St Ann's, Springhallow and Selborne Primary School. We are very grateful to these schools for providing full funding for our Therapists.

Unfortunately, due to financial reasons, St John's Primary School was unable to continue funding Music Therapy in its school. The service terminated in the Autumn half term of 2022, after over 20 years.

We are noticing that schools in Ealing are facing difficult budget decisions. This year, Selborne Primary School advised that, after two years of Music Therapy provision, they were unable to continue to fund Music Therapy for the 2024/25 academic year.

We are very grateful that all our remaining schools - Belvue, Mandeville, St Ann's and Springhallow - are able to continue working with us to provide Music Therapy provision for their next school year. This secures a firm financial base, enabling us to deliver Music Therapy in financial year 2024/25.

Our schools tell us how much they value Music Therapy. This is very encouraging given that awareness around the value of Music Therapy is not yet at the same level as more well-known support such as Speech and Language Therapy.

Our vision and strategy for the next 10 to 20 years is to expand the provision of Music Therapy to every child who could benefit from it in the London Borough of Ealing, to raise awareness of the value of Music Therapy, and to raise the profile of Ealing



Music Therapy. The demand is enormous, with potentially 850 pupils with additional needs in Ealing who could benefit. Today we provide Music Therapy to 70-80 children per year.

We have now widened our vision and are planning to start a Saturday Service for 4-11 year olds with Autism and additional needs who cannot access Music Therapy in their nursery or primary school.

To realise our expansion vision, we have made several grant and funding applications to build our operational management capability. As a result, we are delighted that we have now employed an Operations Manager and a Music Therapy Assistant on a part-time basis.

We are extremely grateful to the Postlethwaite Music Fund, the Ealing Co-op Local Community Fund (with contributions being made by local Co-op members), and in particular the John Lyons Charity which has awarded us a grant of £20,000 for three years.

As part of our plans to start a Saturday Music Therapy Service, we have made several funding applications to grant providers, and we are awaiting the outcome of these.

Our income remains short term, i.e. the schools renew their funding on an annual basis. To meet our contractual and statutory obligations, our cash reserves policy is to notionally maintain 75% of annual operating costs as Restricted Reserves; with Unrestricted/Undesignated Reserves at around 3 months operating costs.

**Donations and Contributions 2023-2024 (in £)**

Donor	Amount
The Postlethwaite Music Fund	£1,000
Co-op Community Fund	£4,022
The John Lyons Charity	£20,000

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INCOME	TOTAL	RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED	2023
Income from schools	£82,115	£82,115	£0	£75,690
Donations	£130	£0	£130	£46
Bank Interest	£1,838	£0	£1,838	£317
Grants	£25,022	£21,000	£4,022	£13,680
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£109,105</b>	<b>£103,115</b>	<b>£5,990</b>	<b>£89,742</b>
EXPENDITURE	TOTAL	RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED	2023
Salaries	£80,262	£80,262	£0	£66,290
Training/ Supervision	£1,414	£1,414	£0	£2,047
PR/Publicity /Website	£1,342	£1,342	£0	£558
Other costs	£4,074	£4,004	£70	£1,888
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£87,092</b>	<b>£87,022</b>	<b>£70</b>	<b>£70,783</b>
<b>Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>£22,013</b>	<b>£16,093</b>	<b>£5,920</b>	<b>£18,959</b>
<b>Balance B/Fwd</b>	<b>£82,110</b>	<b>£74,447</b>	<b>£7,663</b>	<b>£18,959</b>
<b>Transfer</b>		<b>£12,626</b>	<b>£12,626</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Closing Funds</b>	<b>£104,123</b>	<b>£77,915</b>	<b>£26,209</b>	<b>£82,110</b>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

ASSETS	2024	2023
<b>Net Assets - Bank Balance</b>	£104,123	£82,110
<b>Financed by: Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves</b>	£104,123	£82,110

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

We have examined Income and Expenditure Accounts and the supporting information from the records.

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the private fund of The Ealing Music Therapy Project as at 31 March 2024, and of its surplus for the year ended on that date.

**BHANOT & CO.**  
**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**  
**CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS**  
SIGNED 16/7/2024



# THANK YOU

## FOR YOUR SUPPORT



JOHN LYON'S  
CHARITY



The *Postlethwaite*  
Music Foundation



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music  
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[ealingmusictherapy.org](http://ealingmusictherapy.org) / [info@ealingmusictherapy.org](mailto:info@ealingmusictherapy.org)

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