

# Supporting Musical Progression for Children from very Disadvantaged Communities participating in the English 'In Harmony' Program

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## ABSTRACT

The six *In Harmony* programs in England, supported by the UK government, differ according to local context and need. The core program is compulsory for children in participating primary schools and takes place during school time. Extra-curricular voluntary musical activities are also offered while the children are at primary school and for those who have transferred to secondary school. This research explored the challenges faced by the children in continuing with their musical activities when they left primary school and it was no longer compulsory to continue attending the program. Programs provided written details of the way their project operated. Focus group interviews were conducted with young people (28 children) and parents (26). Individual interviews were carried out with each head of program, 20 members of teaching staff, four primary headteachers and seventeen young people. Motivation to continue to engage with music included having a love of music, a strong musical identity, friends involved in music making, positive beliefs about musical potential and confidence to resist negative peer pressure. Staff in the programs were highly committed, providing transport, maintaining personal contact through transfer to secondary school and developing strong positive relationships with young people. Performance opportunities, courses in the school holidays, parental support, the involvement of professional musicians, the commitment of primary head teachers, and excellent relationships with partner and progression organisations were all important. Parents were concerned about the costs of their children being involved beyond primary school, while the programs faced a range of challenges including the number of secondary schools the children attended; having a critical mass for extra-curricular activities; ensuring appropriate age and expertise mix; location and size of accommodation; funding; engaging parents; cultural and religious beliefs; maintaining momentum; and setting up and maintaining partnerships. Even when opportunities to continue with music beyond primary school were available for young people, they did not always take them up. It was their commitment to music which was key to their engagement in the long term.

## KEYWORDS

Music; progression; disadvantage; Sistema; education

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## INTRODUCTION

The performance of the Simon Bolivar youth orchestra in 2007 at the BBC promenade concerts inspired Julian Lloyd Webber to lead lobbying efforts to persuade the government to establish a program in England inspired by Venezuela's El Sistema. In 2008, Schools Minister Andrew Adonis launched In Harmony, which was presented as a community development program aimed at using music to bring positive change to the lives of children in some of the most deprived areas of England, delivering benefits across the wider community. The program drew on the principles of El Sistema, which sought to use the orchestra as a safe, social and empowering space to sustain and develop the well-being of children. The Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF) funded three pilot projects which were to be primarily social programs using music through the model of a symphony orchestra to improve the lives of individuals and communities. In 2012/13, the funding responsibility for In Harmony shifted to Arts Council England (ACE) and a decision was made to continue to fund two of the initial pilots, Liverpool and Lambeth. In July 2012, four new programs were funded to start in September 2012 for an initial three-year period: Telford and Stoke; Nottingham; Newcastle; and Leeds. By this time, the core principles of In Harmony had changed slightly reflecting the change in responsibility for funding. In Harmony was viewed by Arts Council England as being inspirational for children, families, schools and communities, raising the expectations and life chances of children through a high-quality music education rather than being primarily a social program.

Several evaluations of the In Harmony programs have been undertaken. Some were funded by the Department for Education (DfE) or Arts Council England (ACE) and included all of the programs (Hallam, Rogers and Creech, 2011; Lord, Sharp, Dawson et al., 2013; Lord, Sharp, Mehta et al., 2015; Lord, Sharp, Harland et al., 2016; White, Lord and Sharp, 2016). Others focused on individual or groups of programs (Lewis, Demie and Rogers, 2011; Rimmer, Street and Phillips, 2014; Rushton, 2016; Wilson, 2012; Burns and Bewick, 2013; Burns, 2014; Robinson, 2015, Burns, 2016). Typically, these evaluations focused on the impact of the programs on change in the children's academic achievement, their musical achievements and in some cases the impact on the community more widely. They did not focus on the opportunities that the children had to continue their musical activities when they left their primary schools. The In Harmony programs consist of lessons and orchestral activities that take place in primary schools during school time and are compulsory for all of the children. To continue their engagement with instrumental lessons and orchestral activities when they transfer to secondary school requires young people to participate in extra-curricular activities. This often has cost implications and also depends on the opportunities available locally.

The research reported here sets out the findings of a research project which explored the factors promoting or acting as barriers to children participating in the In Harmony program at primary school (where it is compulsory) continuing with musical activities when they transferred to secondary school. This paper focuses on the perspectives of the staff of the programs. The perspectives of participating students and parents are reported in full elsewhere (Hallam and Burns, 2018a), although some of the comments they made in interviews are included where relevant. Continuation of musical activities by the participants after primary school was viewed as particularly important for the sustainability of the program over time. This is partly because the program is expensive to run as children participate in a whole school ensemble in school time and also have at least one but sometimes two

small group lessons during the week also in school time. The time for these musical activities is taken from other school subjects. If children do not continue with musical activities when they leave primary school, the funding and time cannot reasonably be justified when high quality classroom music teaching or whole class instrumental tuition could be provided much less expensively. Programs need to be able to demonstrate that they are making a real contribution to the personal, social and musical development of the participating children in the long term.

At the time of the research, typically the staff running the programs had little information regarding the musical activities of In Harmony children once they left primary school unless the children attended activities provided by the In Harmony programs themselves. Some of the longer running programs had well established ensemble activities for older children. One had 160 children aged 3-13 years attending after school In Harmony activities but still faced challenges of retention when the young people were at secondary school and approaching the time when they had to take important national examinations. Another had 89 children attending after school activities, while a third reported that between 6% and 13% of young people had maintained In Harmony activity until age 16 since 2009 with 25% continuing until aged 16 with other providers or independently. One new program had only 12 young people attending an after school nucleo while another had nine children attending a Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) access program and three the organisation's Children's Chorus. The recently established programs wanted to learn from the longer established programs what might be the most successful approaches to maintaining engagement. The shift in the aim of the In Harmony program as a whole to being inspirational and raising the expectations and life chances of participating children had led to a greater concern with the extent to which young people were continuing to engage with music once it was no longer compulsory. This paper focuses on the role of the programs in promoting continuation of participation. The research also explored the perspectives of the participating young people and their parents/carers. These are reported fully elsewhere (see Hallam & Burns, 2018) but some illustrative quotes from those interviews are included here. The research questions were: What supports continuation with musical activities beyond primary school for children participating in In Harmony programs? What are the challenges faced by programs in providing such opportunities?

## METHODS

Details of the nature of the implementation of the program in each location were collected from the annual reports provided by the programs to Arts Council England and the attendance of the researchers at meetings of the program leaders with representatives of Arts Council England. Details were further clarified by interviews with each program leader. Focus group interviews were conducted with 28 young people who were about to transfer to secondary school or who had successfully transferred in the past and 21 with parents. The focus group and individual interviews were set up by the In Harmony program leaders and carried out after school when extra-curricular In Harmony activities were taking place. The program leaders selected the parents and children who were to be interviewed depending on availability and willingness to participate. Seventeen individual interviews were undertaken with young people who were also selected by the program leaders. All of the program leaders were interviewed individually as were twenty In Harmony teaching staff and four primary school headteachers,

The interviews with staff explored the challenges that they faced in engaging and supporting young people to progress their musical activities after their transition to secondary school; what they believed the barriers were to ongoing engagement; how they had tackled the challenges and barriers; how successful this had been; and the partnerships they had developed to assist with providing opportunities for young people to continue with their musical activities. The questions for young people and their parents focused on the support that they had received and the challenges and barriers that they faced.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis as outlined broadly by Braun and Clarke (2006). Each transcript was read several times and commonalities were identified adopting Cooper and McIntyre's (1993) seven stage process: 1. Reading a random sample of transcripts; 2. Identifying points of similarity and difference among these transcripts in relation to the research questions; 3. Generating theories (on the basis of 2) describing emergent answers to the research questions; 4. Testing theories against a new set of transcripts; 5. Testing new theories against transcripts already dealt with; 6. Carrying all existing theories forward to new transcripts; 7. Repeating the above process until all data were examined and all theories tested against all data. Once the themes had been identified, examples were chosen to illustrate them. The themes are set out below with illustrative example quotes from the interviews.

The research was carried out using the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association and the British Psychological Society. It was approved by the ethics committee of the UCL Institute of Education.

## THE PROGRAMS

The programs were set up at different times. All were based in primary schools. The schools were all in areas of high deprivation as identified by the English Indices of Deprivation. The regions where the programs were to be established initially were selected by the government, while those which started later were selected by Arts Council England. They had different structures, aims and objectives (see Table 1). Two of the programs were well established and had expanded since their inception in 2009. As a result, they had a larger proportion of older children engaging with In Harmony provision after they had transferred to secondary school. The number of primary schools involved in each program differed and some included Nursery Schools. This affected the overall reach of the programs with a range from 214 – 1100 children and young people. In some programs, several primary schools were located in the same community to try to ensure that the impact of the intervention was felt at community level as well as at the level of the individual child and family.

The leadership of the programs was significantly different. In one case, this had changed since the program began. Some programs were led by National Portfolio Organizations (NPOs) and others by local Music Hubs (Local Authority providers of lessons and ensemble opportunities). National Portfolio Organizations are funded by Arts Council England and include major symphony orchestras, opera and ballet companies, while Music Hubs are based at local Authority level and provide a variety of ensemble opportunities for children and young people including orchestras, bands, choirs, chamber music groups in addition to instrumental tuition. The NPOs involved in In Harmony included a symphony orchestra, a presenting music organization with a resident orchestra and an opera company. These

differences influenced the musical content, assets and resources that the programs could draw on. The symphony orchestras and opera company provided support from professional musicians and access to prestigious venues for concerts, while the Music Hubs provided a wide range of ensemble opportunities, instrumental tuition, and instrument hire, although there were financial costs to these. Where the lead organisation was an NPO, there was generally greater access to professional musicians. One of the orchestras involved was highly committed to the program and its professional musicians participated in some teaching sessions and the children's In Harmony Orchestra rehearsed in the same building as the symphony orchestra. The program that was based in London was able to draw on resources from several orchestras and other professional musicians working in the capital. Two of the programs had no access to such resources. Five projects were based in urban conurbations, the other program in a small town. This program faced particular challenges relating to travel and networking and the lack of any major cultural activity in the town. Transport networks varied between the programs and the extent to which the children had free access to them.

The programs had a wide range of different extra-curricular activities. The longer standing programs had a well established offer including orchestras, string groups, wind groups and choirs. The more recently established programs typically offered some activities themselves but collaborated with other providers including Centers for Advanced Training (CATs) which were funded by the government and Saturday Music Centers which were run by local Music Hubs. The instruments on offer in the primary schools were strings in the early years of tuition with a range of woodwind, percussion and brass available for older children. One program offered singing, while in another the offer varied between schools, either brass or strings. The nature of the repertoire learned varied depending in part on the level of expertise of the children. Typically for the younger children the repertoire was based on well known folk tunes or simple arrangements of classical music, for example, Ode to Joy (Beethoven) the March from Carmen (Bizet). The longer standing programs had young people at more advanced levels and were able to include a wide range of music in their programs including original versions of classical music, for instance, movements from Beethoven's 1<sup>st</sup> symphony and complex arrangements of popular music, for instance by the Beatles and Michael Jackson. The teaching staff wrote the arrangements. The programs differed in the extent to which the ensemble repertoire was taught in the small group lessons. In some programs a broader repertoire was taught largely from instrumental tutor books. Creative activities were included in all programs. The nature of these differed depending on available resources but typically the children would compose a piece of music together which they would then perform at a concert for parents and others. In one program children made up their own rhythmic patterns using cut out notation, in another young people had access to electronic keyboards which enabled them to compose songs some of which were performed in concerts.

The programs had a range of different partnerships. Having a wide range of partners, across sector, and with other music organizations, for instance the Music Hubs, which provided orchestras, various bands, and choirs, and professional orchestras and universities emerged as important for the young people being able to continue with musical activities after leaving primary school. Some programs were well networked, while others adopted more insular approaches (see **Table 1**). Collecting data on the extent to which the young people continued with their musical activities after leaving primary school proved difficult for all of the programs. The children transitioned from each primary school to several different

secondary schools. Maintaining contact with them was therefore problematic unless they attended extra-curricular activities provided by In Harmony. Making and retaining contact with young people who attended Academy secondary schools presented particular challenges as these schools operated independently of Local Authorities. In one program all of the secondary schools were Academies. Where young people were attending In Harmony extra-curricular activities or where there were strong partnerships with other local musical organizations, particularly Music Hubs or professional orchestras their progression to other activities was easier to track. If the young people were making music informally at home or with friends with no formal tuition or ensemble activities, monitoring their musical activity was particularly challenging.

All of the programs received core funding from Arts Council England. In addition to this they variably received funding from other sources. Some primary schools contributed to the costs, while some of the NPOs supported the programs financially or helped with fund raising. Some programs received funding from charitable trusts or private donors. The extent to which funding additional to that provided by ACE was available led to differences in the resources that the programs had available to them. Funding impacted on capacity. For instance, some programs had project management/administrative staff which supported their ability to provide pastoral care, to track children and young people and to gather data. In some programs musicians were on full time contracts whilst others were engaged on sessional contracts. This impacted on the allocation of time and resource and accounted for differences in delivery and approach. The more teaching staff employed the higher the levels of tuition, individually or in small groups, that could be offered to the children. Where staff numbers and time were limited groups were larger and the lessons of shorter duration, This also applied to the ensemble activities. The programs had different strengths. One was particularly effective in engaging pupils with Special Educational Needs, another in gathering data for supporting ongoing evaluation, while yet another had integrated In Harmony provision into mainstream Music Hub provision. Access to free and extensive transport in London supported ongoing progression to other musical activities, while the very close involvement of one professional orchestra provided musical role models that inspired the young people and enhanced retention. **Table 1** (see next page) sets out key comparisons between the programs.

## THE FINDINGS

Ten themes were derived from the analysis of the interviews which contributed to successful program implementation and led to a greater number of young people continuing with their musical activities. These were: 1 extra-curricular activities; 2 the commitment of the In Harmony teams; 3 performance opportunities; 4 holiday courses; 5 the involvement of professional musicians; 6 the role of primary school head teachers; 7 partnerships with other organisations; 8 pedagogy and repertoire; 9 the role of graded instrumental examinations; 10 ongoing reflection, reshaping and adaptation. A further set of themes focused on the challenges faced by the programs. There were ten of these: 1) communication with secondary schools; 2) building relationships with secondary schools; 3) the timing of extra-curricular activities; 4) issues relating to extra-curricular activities; 5) accommodation and its location ; 6) finance; 7) engaging parents and carers; 8) cultural issues; 9) maintaining momentum; 10) partnerships. The themes and examples from the interviews which illustrate them are set out below.

<b>Start date</b>	April 2009	September 2012	March 2009	Autumn 2012	January 2013	Autumn 2012
<b>Lead organization</b>	Music Hub	NPO	NPO	NPO	Music Hub	Local Authority Creative and Active Communities Team Council
<b>Number of participating schools</b>	Three primary schools	Three primary schools	Two primary schools, a Nursery and a Children's Centre	One primary school	Four primary schools and integration into Music Hub provision	One primary school and a secondary school
<b>Number of pupils (2015/16)</b>	600 pupils	1000 pupils	868 pupils	214 pupils	1773 pupils	624 pupils
<b>Number of progression secondary schools</b>			10	9	16	5
<b>Progression opportunities for age 11+</b>	Nucleo after school orchestra	In Harmony Hub, choirs, Young Musicians orchestra, NPO Children's Chorus	NPO Youth Orchestra and Youth Company	NPO Saturday program, Centre for Advanced Training	Music Camp, Area Band Network, Various bands at different levels of expertise	Nucleo Orchestra for years 4-9; sectionals and creative sessions
<b>Extra-curricular activities</b>	Nucleo instrumental and ensemble programs; holiday courses; mentoring programs	Practice clubs, choir, ensembles and Junior Strings Orchestra	After school clubs – Mini Strings, Junior Philharmonic and Youth Philharmonia	After school tuition, adoption of second instrument, and Symphony Orchestra	Ensembles and residential activities	Orchestra, ensembles, lunchtime practice clubs and choir
<b>Instruments on offer</b>	Strings, woodwind, brass and percussion	Singing as well as strings	Strings, woodwind, brass and percussion	Strings, woodwind, brass and percussion	Brass, woodwind and strings	Strings, woodwind, percussion and brass
<b>Partnerships</b>	Professional orchestra, Cello society	Local Music Hubs, Local University	Local Universities, Professional Orchestra, Local Council,	Local Music Hub; Playgroup and Community Health Project; Family Group; Women and Girls group.	Local Music Hub, Local University.	Local Music Hubs, Higher Education Conservatoire; Local chamber orchestra
<b>Location</b>	Urban conurbation	Urban conurbation	Urban conurbation; primaries in one community	Urban conurbation	Urban conurbation; Schools spread throughout the City	More isolated
<b>Access to professional orchestral musicians</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Sources of funding</b>	ACE Schools	ACE, Trusts and Schools themselves	ACE, NPO, private donors provided 61% of funding in 2016-17	ACE and School fundraising	ACE Schools	ACE Schools

**Table 1:** operational details relating to each program

## PROGRAM FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESSFUL CONTINUATION WITH MUSICAL ACTIVITY

### *EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES*

Program staff agreed that offering extra-curricular activities early on, while the children were still at primary school was crucial in supporting successful progression. Participation in these activities generated the self-motivation that was critical to ongoing engagement. Examples are set out below:

Extra-curricular work is key, and as soon as possible. (In Harmony teacher)

The staff here in the primary school support us with getting the kids on board with out of school provision. I think we all recognise that this is the crucial thing about maintaining engagement at secondary school. The children have to be self-motivated learners. Participating out of school gets them into the habit. They meet other children from other schools and this helps them in the transition to secondary school. (In Harmony program leader)

It is my feeling that Year 6 children are more likely to carry on if they are already engaging with out of school activity when they go into year 7. So, a lot of effort goes into supporting the Year 6 children to take part in after school activity and this can seem unfair as we end up devoting so much time to only a few children. (In Harmony teacher)

To emphasise the importance of the extra-curricular activities one program had *'banned the use of the word club. That's too drop in, drop out.'* (In Harmony program leader)

It was particularly important to engage young people in extra-curricular activities before the transfer to secondary school:

Recruiting them to an ensemble before they leave to go to secondary school is important as this makes them independent learners and ensures they have adapted to out of school engagement. (In Harmony teacher)

We offer the orchestra which runs after school, which all of the students who move into secondary schools are invited to attend alongside Year 4 and upwards from primary school. Most of the students who continue playing do take up this offer and are actively engaged in this orchestra. (In Harmony program leader)

Staff in the programs recognized the impact of transition to secondary school and how it could affect attendance at extra-curricular activities and were prepared to put forward arguments for continuation to parents based on the need for children to have opportunities to enjoy themselves and socialise:

We have a transition meeting once a year to tell parents that In Harmony is not just a primary activity and that we expect the children to carry on when they get to secondary school. We know the questions that the parents are going to ask. We understand now what we can do better and where we can pressure parents, how far we can go (In Harmony program leader)

In Year 7 it's talking to parents and managing that transition giving them a couple of weeks to adjust and then they come back. As long as they're enjoying it, it will be OK. (In Harmony teacher)



The young people themselves had concerns about the transfer to secondary school and In Harmony staff tried to help the parents realise that In Harmony would offer important out of school activities:

The challenge in Year 7 is the transition. The young people say, “I’ve gone into year 7, I’m tired, I’ve got lots of work to do.” That’s usually easily solved as long as the parents are on side. That’s about talking to the parent, making sure the parent is aware that we’re there to help. And it’s also about the social aspect of recognising that their child is working really hard. Yes, they do need the time out of school to do their homework, but they also need time to socialise and to do something structured that moves forward. (In Harmony program leader)

If children continued with the extra-curricular activities in Year 7 they tended to continue through Years 8 and 9. The next challenge came as young people approached the General Certificate of School Education (GCSE) examination when they were aged 16:

Once they’re in Year 7 or 8 it’s pretty standard and easy to retain. In Year 9 you start getting ums and ahs but in Year 10 it’s like uh, oh, work comes in. We’ve just got to the stage, literally this week, when there’s a few parents saying to us “next year they’re in Year 11. I don’t want my child coming because they’ve got so much work to do in school.” So, the challenge now is they’re going into Year 11 how do we set out a program that furthers their music education but keeps the social aspect, at the same time combatting the GCSE workload. (In Harmony teacher)

Some students indicated that their parents were pressuring them to leave:

My Dad sometimes says I shouldn’t be doing it anymore. (Year 9 student)

It’s just because GCSEs are coming up and Mum and Dad want you to get an education. (Year 9 student)

At least one young person had been prepared to challenge her parents about giving up her musical activities to increase studying time, although she had now recognised the extent of the challenge while still trying to maintain her musical activity, albeit less frequently:

My Mum thinks I’m lacking sleep and stuff and she thinks I should catch up on sleep and she doesn’t really want me to do that much anymore. If they want me to give up I tell them no. I want to be here. I’ve been here since I was a kid and it was something that took my mind off the stress of school and my parents were like I think you need to focus on your GCSEs so I told them no, I’m still going but now I realise that I do need to focus on GCSEs but when I can, I come back. (Year 10 student)

There was also an issue of the progress that the children were making musically within the extra-curricular activities. One program addressed this by setting up a new orchestra for each cohort group. The children in each program of the cohort orchestras progressed together. This approach recognized the importance of the friendship groups already established and the difficulties of having ensembles where the age range was too wide.

It’s slightly different when you have the older children [from] Years 9 and 10 and you bring in Year 6s because it’s, “why are there a load of little children all of a sudden,” and, “it’s not as good as it used to be.” That’s why we’ve tried to keep it as, “that’s your orchestra and you’re following the journey

together and the next orchestra is not going to come in and upset you, they have their own orchestra and journey.” (In Harmony program leader)

In contrast another program was creating a more advanced group where the children could move to a different orchestra:

We will be starting a more advanced chamber orchestra for invited students. The entry criteria for this new group will be shared with the students, enabling those not yet meeting the criteria to have clearly defined goals to aspire to. We will also be looking to encourage those students not yet reaching these levels to move into more principal positions within the existing orchestra, thus gaining extra experience in this setting. (In Harmony program leader)

The extra-curricular activities set up by several programs could be accessed by other children who lived in the local area. The extent to which this occurred depended on resources. Some programs had insufficient space to cater for more students.

We quietly advertise. If we had enough money to run on another day I could advertise more. I’m reluctant to do a big shout-out to everyone because we don’t have space. Some of the Music Service teachers have talked about it. We have music service teachers working for us and we’ve had some children from other primary schools come through that. (In Harmony program leader)

#### ***THE COMMITMENT OF THE IN HARMONY TEAMS***

The In Harmony teams were hugely committed and supportive, doing more than was contractually required of them on a consistent basis. Their commitment to the children and the community was a recurring theme in interviews. Parents described how the members of the team were approachable:

The main things that have made it possible are actually the team themselves. They are approachable if there are problems. They are supportive and have made it their business to get to know us as well as our children. They stay in touch and I trust them with my child. (Parent)

Having a small group of teachers, one who cycles everywhere and talks to the parents if he hasn’t seen a child at rehearsals so everyone looks out for him. That’s the difference from the Music Hub. The teachers work in the area. They know everybody, they use the same cafes. They are part of the community. (In Harmony program leader)

Some staff referred to their role in providing transport when parents were unable to do so:

Some of them there are social barriers to coming. Children who want to come but their parents can’t take them home, or they can’t get picked up. The whole of last term I ended up driving three children home because their Mum had had an operation and couldn’t drive and they couldn’t afford a taxi. (In Harmony teacher)

Maintaining contact was easier when the same staff were involved:

The music team are the same for in school and out of school provision and that is important as it creates consistency and makes the children feel safe when joining out of school classes. (Parent)

The staff described the strategies that they adopted when children did not return to the extra-curricular activities after transfer to secondary school:

If children don't turn up to rehearsal on the first week back after transition to secondary school, we're straight on the phone calling, chasing. On occasions, I've gone to the house and knocked on the door. That's where we differ from other provision. (In Harmony teacher)

The relationships between the music tutor and the child were also pointed out as critical. One program leader referred to this as '*catching the child*':

It is in the personal connection, the knowledge of their background and needs. They can slip through the net if this is not there. (In Harmony program leader)

Personal contact is important. I bumped into the twins and they hadn't known that they could still access provision but they are now. Keeping the lines open is important. They can drop off in Year 7 but come back when they are ready. They are much more likely to continue of their own free will. (In Harmony teacher)

### **PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

All of the program staff recognized the importance of performance opportunities in engaging the young people and their parents. They needed to be frequent and sometimes in prestigious venues:

Performance opportunities are important for confidence. (In Harmony teacher)

Concerts are very important, just for morale. When we do a concert, every kid is twinkly eyed. "Wow, what a performance, that was really good." The majority of performances, they talk about it afterwards. The concerts really do bring everyone together. They feel the pressure but afterwards they really do reap the rewards. (In Harmony program leader)

The philharmonic concert was amazing. They had the opportunity to meet the musicians about their careers. Those big events, it's just wonderful for them to see what performing is all about. They give us tickets to see other people performing so the kids can see that in the future it could be them sitting there playing the music and somebody paying to come and watch them. It makes them feel confident that they can do it. (Parent)

Parents were generally supportive of the concerts and commented on the opportunities that their children had to perform and their impact:

We do get good turn-outs for most of our concerts. The older ones; it's the only time we get to see some parents. They take time off work to come and see the concert and what the children are doing. It's very important when the children first start to find out what is this thing. If we have a concert there is a momentum. I would say concerts are very important. (In Harmony program leader)

She loves performing. I think when my children have said like, "oh, it's tiring!" I'm always glad when the performance is due and when it is over it is such a boost. The big performances motivate them more. (Parent)

The performances are great. I think they get a big buzz from them. It builds up the confidence as well. (Parent)

The young people themselves commented positively on their experiences of performance:

The first couple of performances you feel like kind of shy, worried that you'll mess up your notes or something or you're going to do something stupid that everyone will remember. It's nerve wracking at first but then you're like they're clapping for me. I guess that is what fills your heart with joy. When you see your family standing there looking proud you feel really happy that you've done something that makes them feel proud. (Year 9 student)

### **HOLIDAY COURSES**

The programs ran courses during the school Holidays. These were important in enhancing motivation.

Music Camp is I think the single most important thing we do. It has the most impact. We tie music in with outdoor education and it helps them to see music as part of their life rather than just being a school thing. (In Harmony program leader)

We ran an Easter course where children came and were based in the local university for a week. Over the course of the week they worked with a professional choir. There were about 25 In Harmony children out of the 45 children overall. One dropped out on the first day but all the others stayed throughout. By the end of the week they had all swapped numbers. They were going to keep in touch and all that kind of thing. That was a real success. (In Harmony program leader)

Parents appreciated the activities during the holidays.

Some of them have been to all of the summer courses. You don't have to push them to go. They want to do it. (Parent)

My daughter was bullied at primary school and her confidence went down. So when she got to secondary school it was like how will I cope. So when she started here, straight away that helped her confidence and her friends became the past. This is my family and when it is Summer holidays and Easter she doesn't want it to end. She says I'm going to miss it. We talked about moving house and she didn't want to move because of In Harmony. It feels good and she is happy. (Parent)

The young people valued the opportunities to meet new people and make new friends:

You get a lot of opportunities that other people won't get, like you get to go on trips and you make new friends. (Student Year 8)

I enjoy playing an instrument because it's different and you get to do a lot of things, meet other people. (Student Year 9)

When I did Sistema England summer school last year I realised that my instrument was important to me and that it gave me better focus and confidence. I liked it before then but it just exploded and changed and I am looking forward to this year. I met players from other In Harmony programs and it taught me stuff I didn't know before. I have my own clarinet and hope to get into the CAT (Centre for Advanced Training) next year. I think I will continue with music because of my own determination and the support of my Mam. (Student Year 6)

### ***THE INVOLVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS***

The involvement of professional musicians was viewed by In Harmony staff as supporting continued engagement with music. Although only one In Harmony program is led by a professional orchestra all aspired to involve professional musicians as much as possible. The programs recognized the need to give young people the opportunity to meet musicians:

Role modelling is difficult for us as we don't have a professional orchestra as a partner. We work with professional players so the kids see diverse faces on the platform. (In Harmony program leader)

At age 10/11 if someone wants to become a musician it's our responsibility to show them as much as possible of what it means to be a musician. We offer that and what it means to be a professional musician. We have pathways available, more specialised training. We can guide and support other activities. Wanting to be a musician comes from within. We can support that inner drive which will help them become resilient. (In Harmony program leader)

We met amazing people like the Beijing orchestra, Dudemal. We played a lot in the Royal Festival Hall, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, just many really inspiring orchestras and musicians. It just like motivated me. I want to be like them. (Student Year 12)

### ***THE ROLE OF PRIMARY HEAD TEACHERS***

The critical role played by supportive primary head teachers was repeatedly raised as important to successful progression.

The schools we are working with are really co-operative. We managed to put on a very nice assembly performance at one school when Ofsted (the school inspectorate) came round and they have started to take music more seriously since then. They are really pleased with the music in school. (In Harmony program leader)

Where finance was limited for the program, some primary schools helped with administration, for instance, booking coaches, supporting trips, writing to parents.

### ***PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS***

In meetings of In Harmony program leaders, representatives of ACE and the research team, reference was frequently made to the importance of having strong relationships with partner and progression organisations. These were viewed by program leaders as crucial to young people's progression. The extent of the formal partnerships which programs had varied enormously. There were informal partnerships with the other In Harmony programs and some students could access the In Harmony leadership summer camp. In most areas, but not all, there were youth orchestras and other ensembles which young people could access. Some, but not all programs, had strong links with their Music Hub and some had developed links with their local councils or local institutions of higher education. As one program leader put it:

You kind of want a separate identity for In Harmony but at the same time, with the current climate for arts funding in the country, we are all working towards one common cause and instead of competition we should have collaboration, so we can all contribute to music education. The more

collaborations that can happen, common goals and working together the better. (In Harmony program leader)

We're part of the Lambeth music network which is the Music Hub. We've been on quite an interesting journey with different orchestras. We've developed a really wonderful relationship with the Southbank Sinfonia orchestra. That's a really positive partnership. (In Harmony program leader)

Program leaders perceived that it was important to provide information and guidance for parents and students about career and progression opportunities. The successful strategies that they reported included signposting progression routes, supporting placements and connecting with other providers where the In Harmony program could not provide opportunities itself.

### **PEDAGOGY AND REPERTOIRE**

It was part of the ethos of In Harmony that the programs should be inclusive with all children being able to participate whatever their socio-economic background and prior educational attainment:

We do what we do really well. A lot of children come because they feel confident with us as deliverers. We don't run it as a traditional youth orchestra. We don't sit them down and go we're going to all play this. The after-school offer works on multiple levels. It is all differentiated and it includes the SEN (Special Educational Needs) children. Our orchestra completely reflects the makeup of the percentage of SEN and free school meal children in the school. We've tried really hard to set it up so that even if you can only play open strings and you might never be able to progress further than that you can still access the orchestra with your friends. The way we work the sectionals is we have sectionals for the more advanced players and a big sectional for the others doing more creative work. (In Harmony program leader)

Differentiation was an important element of the inclusive approach. Staff made arrangements of the repertoire to include elements which were very easy and others which were at more advanced levels. This meant that a range of children, with different levels of expertise, could play together:

In the wind band, most are from Years 5, 6 and 7 but I have one Year 3 child who needs a lot of attention. We do a lot of differentiation of parts to make them feel like they can play. So, it's a sense of achievement at the same time as challenging. (In Harmony teacher)

Mentors were also used to support newcomers:

It's all about differentiation and trying to make it fun while learning that someone's new and getting out mentors, who have been here for a couple of terms. They mentor these new children. (In Harmony teacher)

Praise was an important element of the pedagogy adopted:

The more praise that you give to a child, the more they are going to want to do something. We do work with some difficult kids but at the same time we praise them and they're "I'm ready to play and I'm sitting up straight", which is always fantastic. (In Harmony teacher)

The repertoire was perceived to be important.

We work with musical styles from across the board because inclusivity is important to us. The orchestra is therefore very different to other youth orchestras. A councillor once said that we make music fit the children and I think that is what we do. (In Harmony teacher)

As the children made musical progress, they recognized that some music was more complex and therefore challenging. They appreciated this:

In Year 6 we wanted to play pop music but then as we got more advanced I think we all wanted to play more advanced music which is usually classical. (Year 10 student)

I really like all the songs that we play here, I think they're all really good. We play a wide range of things from pop songs to Mozart and I really like the variety. (Student Year 10)

Repertoire is very important. The old ones do want to play stuff they know but they also want to play the classical. When I asked them what they liked playing they said the Beethoven piece. It was the last thing I expected. What they want now that they are at that level, they want to play complex music. The younger ones it doesn't matter. They go along with it regardless of what it is. As long as it's the right challenge for their level I think they'll enjoy it.' (In Harmony teacher)

#### **THE ROLE OF GRADED INSTRUMENTAL EXAMINATIONS**

Some parents, particularly those whose children wanted to pursue a career in music felt that it was important for their children to take graded instrumental examinations. Some parents felt that taking examinations would help the children to see how far that they had progressed. One program wanted every child to complete primary school with some form of external assessment, although there were challenges in relation to funding this:

We look for every Year 6 child to have some external assessment. We use what is appropriate for each child. We ask for donations from the parents to cover the cost. One school isn't able to contribute to that and they want to charge the parents the full cost. It's a real challenge. (In Harmony program leader)

Some staff were more ambivalent about instrumental examinations, although they recognised the value in terms of motivation and the amount of practice undertaken.

I am ambivalent towards exams and accreditation but I have seen the reaction of parents and the sense of validation in the child so I am changing my mind. However, finding the right exams is tough because of our pedagogy and the approach. We use ABRSM Music Medals, which are great for supporting engagement in out of school activity in area bands, and graded exams. For brass and wind, we use the jazz exams because they are more 'ear based'. The board made it doable for us by allowing us to use some pieces for trumpet and trombone that we had arranged. We offer mock exams and support sessions and members of staff do the exams with the pupils. I think there is potential for a new qualification. (In Harmony teacher)

I practised a lot before my exam, my Grade 5 exam. I was really strict with myself and I was like "I need to practise every second day". (Year 10 student)

### **ONGOING REFLECTION, RESHAPING AND ADAPTATION**

All the programs reflected on what they had been doing and made changes where they were perceived to be necessary. They constantly evaluated what was working (or not) and why. The changes made varied between programs. In addition to addressing arising needs some were developing new initiatives. Overall, the programs were addressing issues relating to the children being able to continue engaging with music when they left primary school:

I actually feel positive that we are starting to break down the barriers to progression through developing new strategies, subsidies, transport, and provision, ensembles, exams, medals and more connected and joined up provision. (In Harmony program leader)

From September, Year 6 returners will be accessing after school provision off site, completely off site. This is getting away from the community, away from the school with some different staff and also to mix with other children from other schools. For me that's a crucial thing. They will then start to form friendship groups outside of school which will create a key difference. (In Harmony program leader)

In another program, the extra-curricular activity had grown and now needed another layer:

You need something for them to look to, to go on, to work towards. Until you've got that there isn't anything. There has been slow progress. We started our own after-school provision here about 18 months ago. It's slowly grown. It feels like there's a buzz and people want to come. We're up to about 60 children now, which is great but we're still at a fairly low level. From September, we're setting up an advanced orchestra, a next-tier-up ensemble which will be invite-only by teachers. So that's going to be something aspirational that they can progress towards. (In Harmony program leader)

In another case, it was the difference in age groups of the extra-curricular activity which presented a problem:

We started after-school activities for Year 4s up to returning students. That was too big an age gap. The older ones did not want to come back and have sessions with Year 4 children. We're trying to have Year 6 as part of a transition year. They start in Year 5 and then transition to Year 6. That's a fairly new model. (In Harmony program leader)

The current challenge for one of the longer established programs was the number of young people starting their GCSE programs in school:

We've had to adapt and I think it's going to have to adapt again because we've just reached that stage when parents are beginning to panic about GCSEs. So, we're consulting with the parents and the young people about possibly having one long rehearsal on a Friday evening. So that's one possibility. (In Harmony program leader)

Some of the programs, in addition to meeting new challenges which needed to be addressed were developing other new initiatives. One was trying to involve the students more in planning issues:

We're trying to get a student committee; a group of the older children so they can feed in: "This is our orchestra, this is what we would like." So far, we've had the teachers saying, "this is what you're doing." Now they're in year 10



and 11 we feel it is time for them to become more empowered. “This is what we want to do, this is how you keep our interest, this is how we want to progress.” We would then use that as guidance for what we do. Hopefully that will give voice to some of those who are a bit shy. That’s something that we are looking into. (In Harmony program leader)

## **CHALLENGES FOR PROGRAMS**

The information about the challenges to programs was mainly derived from the researchers attending meetings of the program leaders and representatives of ACE and the interviews with program leaders, teaching staff and primary head teachers, although some comments from parents and students are included where pertinent. Generally, parents and children were unaware of the challenges that the programs faced. The challenges that parents and students faced are reported elsewhere (see Hallam and Burns, 2018a).

### **COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAFF IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

In the UK there is no direct link between primary and secondary schools. Parents can choose to send their child to any secondary school that has vacancies. This means that the children participating in In Harmony at one primary school could and did transfer to many different secondary schools. This created particular problems in relation to communication:

The children leave here and progress to up to nine different secondary schools. The challenge is communicating with music teachers in all of these schools. (In Harmony program leader)

The number of schools and the complexities of their organization exacerbated issues relating to children continuing with their musical activities:

Information gets lost when passed to the secondary school, special needs, circumstances, musical progression. There are too many people involved. It is not joined up. (In Harmony program leader)

This made it difficult to keep in contact with the children and track their musical activities, what they were doing. Maintaining contact was particularly important to support continuation of musical activity.

The challenge for us is maintaining contact with the individual pupils and making sure that they know that we always have something on offer for them to come back to and just keeping the engagement with them and the parents. They can just drop off the radar if we’re not careful. (In Harmony teacher)

There are challenges for any child transferring from primary to secondary school. This was reflected in comments from head teachers and also In Harmony staff:

Primary and Secondary schools have different structures and cultures because of size and scale and how they are assessed. For the children this changes in a term. (Primary headteacher)

‘Transition’ is not a good term to use for the shock of the change to secondary school. After the relative security and safety of your primary school where everybody knows each other. You have a six week holiday and then you go into this huge impersonal place where you don’t know people and where only a few of your friends might be. (In Harmony teacher)

At this time children frequently drop out of musical activity unless they have support. In Harmony was able to provide stability for those children who still attended:

Pastoral support is inevitably spread more thinly at secondary school because of size and children can fall through the net. Parents are comfortable here and trust us – they come in to talk to us – they get lost at secondary school as the culture is generally more corporate. (Primary headteacher)

It helps transitioning from primary to secondary as it just stays. They have that, they have their friends. They are at that stage and it actually makes transition easier. It's always hard to pin it down but my two had no problem with transition. The community helps. It must be working for them. (Parent)

### ***BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

The number of secondary schools that the children attended made it difficult to establish good relationships:

It is really difficult to build relationships with 7 – 9 secondary schools and I have only managed to develop firm relationships in two. (In Harmony program leader)

It is difficult to contact secondary school music teachers. The local secondary school has one music teacher left who teaches Year 7 but nothing else. Music has pretty well been taken out of school. We have given up on the secondary schools. (In Harmony program leader)

In some cases, relationships were built but were disrupted by changes in leadership in the schools.

The challenge that we've had is that the local high school, which would be the natural school to go to has been through a succession of leadership changes. It takes time to build a relationship and it took me two years to build a great relationship with the principal of that high school and plans were on the table to take In Harmony to the Year 7s and Year 8s. Unfortunately, the leadership changed and the idea dissolved and we were back to square one again. So, unless the school leadership team are completely understanding and embrace, not just playing an instrument but why we play an instrument as well, then it is going to fail, it is not going to work. (In Harmony program leader)

The lack of strong partnerships with secondary schools was seen as fracturing the '*musical community*' that had been created in the primary school. There were also issues relating to the type of musical activities that were available at the secondary schools:

When the children transfer it's like going from everything to nothing. The pressures of the other subjects take over and the music, even if it is going on, is in some diluted form, any interest that the children take forward will be gone within a year or so. (Primary headteacher)

What happens depends on how much music is on offer at the school they are going to. It depends on the motivation to continue without the same kind of support we were offering. They might be in an environment that doesn't support music. Not only does that mean that things might not be on offer but it might be actively discouraged. (In Harmony program leader)

### ***THE TIMING OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES***

The secondary schools had different end of day times and some were some distance from the venue where the extra-curricular activities were held. This presented considerable challenges about the timing of the out of school provision. For some students, late school finishing times meant that they missed some activities.

My school doesn't finish until 5-0 so it's difficult to get here. I have to get here as quickly as possible and at least play a couple of pieces in wind band. When I was in Year 7 I wasn't allowed to leave school early to get to In Harmony. There was no music in Year 7 or 8 at the school. I was teaching the other students at school. I was better than the teachers. (Student Year 8)

Generally, provision for the older children tended to start later. In one case, early arriving children could participate in a homework club.

The main challenges are from Year 6 to Year 7 because the children in Year 6 go to five or six different secondary schools. For those travelling on two buses it's hard work. They finish at different times. Some are a distance away so it is not always easy for them to get to the hub. If they haven't got transport, they won't be able to attend. (In Harmony program leader)

Don't worry about homework you can fit it in. It's easy in years 7 and 8. You can balance it. In Harmony has a homework club so you can definitely balance it if you really want to. If it's something you love doing nothing should stop you from doing it. (Student Year 9)

### ***ISSUES RELATING TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES***

There was a challenge in how often the activities were offered each term. There was considerable variability. Parents reported that when there were long breaks between sessions it was difficult to motivate their children:

X enjoys it when he's here but because there are so many breaks it's really hard to get him to come back. Even if the teachers couldn't come in at least the children could come in and practice together. That would be something. At least they would be getting together, practising together. (Parent)

It was important to select a day of the week for the activities which was convenient for the students:

The Monday session used to be on a Wednesday and when it became clear that the children were not able to come on Wednesday, as every one of them had something else to do we moved it to a Monday. (In Harmony program leader)

Ensuring that the activities were appropriate was a challenge as was getting a critical mass for extra-curricular activities and ensuring that age, commitment and expertise levels were suitable:

We had an after-school band in the first year to try to support them to make progress and hook them in to after school activity as that seemed key to making them independent music learners. But it became too mixed ability and this demotivated the more able kids. (In Harmony program leader)

### **ACCOMMODATION AND ITS LOCATION**

Accommodation for programs presented many challenges to progression. Location in relation to primary schools was particularly important for the extra-curricular activities. While young children were escorted by school staff to venues, typically, parents were responsible for collecting them. If the venue was too far from their primary school this created a major problem. Many of the young people in secondary schools participating in extra-curricular activities did not wish to return to their primary school for the activities.

We have tried a few things to support them to continue with activities but it is hard to find tactics that work. For example, we used the mini bus to pick them up from their secondary schools for after school provision but they didn't like it. For the same reason, we moved the venue from the primary school to a church in the community and next year to a local girls centre. They simply don't want to come back to their primary school. (In Harmony program leader)

Because we are not in the primary school but a location outside school it creates that barrier straight away. We had it with one of our newer schools where the parents were happy that someone picked them up from school and brought them to the venue but when told that they would have to pick them up indicated that they were not going to do that. I think venue is the key thing and the location. At the moment, we are bang in the middle of the schools that we have children from. If we had to move it would be a major problem. (In Harmony program leader)

In some cases, the older children were able to travel independently:

By the time they get to Year 7 most of the parents trust them to come here on their own and they all leave on their own as a group, on a bus. They all live in a similar kind of area and they all get on the same bus. (In Harmony teacher)

One program which had moved the extra-curricular activities to another venue to reduce cost reported that the young people were unhappy about this and that it was a major challenge to re-engage them.

Now we have to go to x school because it's too expensive here. I really miss rehearsing here because we've been rehearsing here for a long time. It's sad 'cos on Fridays we were always here and it was a nice atmosphere. (Year 10 student)

Space was an issue for some programs as the size of the various ensembles increased:

If we keep on growing, space is going to be an issue. (In Harmony program leader)

The availability of venues for concerts and their cost was also a challenge:

It's difficult to find a venue for a concert. There's no arts stuff really. (In Harmony program leader)

## **FINANCE**

The financial pressures varied between the programs depending to a great extent on whether they could raise funds to supplement what they received from Arts Council England. Changes in management sometimes made it difficult to raise funds but typically programs had local support, although the extent of it varied:

We do have a couple of patrons locally. We have support from local trusts. We had local council support which has now disappeared. So that remains a challenge and the funding has decreased at the same time we are expected to increase the numbers. That potentially challenges the integrity of our program. (In Harmony program leader)

Some programs asked parents for donations to support activities, while others relied on the level of commitment of staff to compensate for underfunding.

We used to have hours of planning time, and now we are at the other extreme. We rely on the good will of staff. (In Harmony program leader)

Historically, some programs received support from their local council:

There isn't much musical culture. There used to be more but the council cut and cut and cut and so we've lost a lot. (In Harmony program leader)

## **ENGAGING PARENTS AND CARERS**

Staff recognized the importance of gaining parental support. This was an ongoing challenge. Many families were reported to not value music. Some parents had never been to an orchestral concert and staff had to take children home afterwards. Nevertheless, programs did all they could to engage parents/carers:

I think a lot is down to parents. They decide. They don't bother to send the children in and support them. (In Harmony team)

Some parents treat after school provision as childcare, so you don't always get the kids who really want to be there. Encouraging them to take instruments home is also important at the earliest stage for the same reason. (In Harmony teacher)

In Years 9 and 10 there was sometimes parental pressure to drop their children's involvement to protect General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) work. This was also in evidence at transfer to secondary school when there were concerns about homework. Programs tried to be flexible to manage this. Some parents did not see music as an appropriate career choice even when their child aspired to this. It was also a challenge to engage parents to help with the program:

My daughter is not sure whether she is going to carry on after Year 6. At the moment we don't know what her timetable is going to be at secondary school. She put a question mark by access last week because the days are not going to change, she's still going to be in on Tuesday and Wednesday so we'll see what her timetable is in a week or two. (Parent)

General Certificate of School Examination (GCSE) is a big issue, heavy workload, child under too much pressure. Parents don't want them to come. It's about making sure that they don't feel pressurised. We offer part of your musical education but it is not the be all and end all. It happens a bit in Year 6 with SATs (Standard Assessment Tests). Some parents didn't send their kids then. If you can get the core to be always there, when one or two can't be there, it will not be seen as nobody is going anymore but rather this is a

bit of a break time because of exams and they will come back. (In Harmony teacher)

Getting parents involved to help has always been an on-off thing but we are trying to make it more consistent. Concerts like today, we get a couple of parents to come and help set up. (In Harmony teacher)

### **CULTURAL ISSUES**

There were a range of cultural issues including those relating to gangs involved in drug related activities:

Gangs are a challenge for us here. There are young people who have brothers and sisters who are in gangs. (In Harmony teacher)

Other cultural barriers related to religious beliefs. This led to challenges in progression for the older children, for instance,

Religious belief is a challenge. Muslim families from particular sects believe that music is evil and you will go to hell if you play. So, we haven't had as much success as I'd like, in particularly for after school activities, that is really very difficult. There is a lack of cultural understanding. One member of staff persisted and wrote to the parents and those children came for a few years. In the end, it didn't work out but we had some success initially. It's a particular problem for the girls. If we have a concert in Ramadan that can be tricky as well. There is a high proportion of Muslims in one school although that is changing. it varies between the schools. (In Harmony program leader)

We have a minority of children from very strict religious backgrounds who won't engage with music at home. There's nothing we can do in that case. We can try everything. Because In Harmony is part of the curriculum in school, they can't do anything about that. They do have to take part in that. There's no way they will come after school. (In Harmony teacher)

These challenges did not only relate to Muslim children:

Religion is a big challenge. Not just Muslims, 7<sup>th</sup> day Adventists. She can't come on Fridays. We can't change that. (In Harmony program leader)

Clashes with other family commitments were also cited as presenting problems relating to attendance.

Polish club clashes with Saturday school and I feel awful making him go to Polish club! (Parent)

### **MAINTAINING MOMENTUM**

Maintaining momentum within programs was a recurring theme. After the initial introduction of the program into a primary school it became difficult to sustain the excitement during the implementation of the program extension for older children:

The original buzz has perhaps gone. There are not as many big opportunities and it is not as special as it was. This is a challenge for us. How do you refresh and keep making it feel special? (In Harmony program leader)

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

To support musical progression it was essential to have partnerships with other providers of musical activities in the locality. This was often challenging.

We have fractured musical communities in this city, so we need to work better together to join it all back up (In Harmony program leader)

A relationship with the Music Hub would be good. There can be a lot of politics wrapped up in these things sometimes, but I'd like to see it being tried and with the secondary schools as well. (In Harmony program leader)

Partnership could lead to a range of different activities:

We're still trying to give them opportunities, like trips and concerts and these sorts of things. I think that they are really important. The children who come back are generally the children who went to stuff, professional orchestras or a trip to XXX. I think we can do more with our partnership with x, although it is a long way. We have an apprenticeship scheme where students come across, it is good for them and an extra pair of hands for us. Whether there's something to do with one-to-one teaching that we could get occasionally I don't know. Getting to XXX is a challenge and it is a challenge to get people to come here. We did a joint concert with XXX orchestra which is a good quality amateur orchestra but we had to go to XXX for that. Local partnerships would be really useful. (In Harmony program leader)

In many cases there was the potential for programs to develop a greater range of partnerships, although some already had many partners, formal and informal. Despite this there was a general feeling that there needed to be greater coherence in the opportunities and pathways on offer.

We need system change – there is a lack of connectivity between the hubs and In Harmony. Pathways and progression opportunities need to be more joined up and clear. (In Harmony program leader)

## **DISCUSSION**

There are two key reasons why it is important for children to continue with musical activities after engaging with In Harmony at primary school. Firstly, the benefits of engaging with music on the intellectual, personal and social development of young people have been demonstrated to be stronger the longer musical activity continues (Hallam, 2014; Hallam and Rogers, 2018). If In Harmony only benefits children in primary school many of the possible benefits will not be realised. Of course, this applies to all children participating in El Sistema or Sistema inspired programs. In addition, the In Harmony program requires very high levels of staffing which makes it very expensive. If it comes to be viewed as merely a substitute for primary school music education, in times of austerity it is likely to lose funding as class music taught by generalist class teachers, peripatetic specialist primary music teachers or whole class instrumental tuition can provide music education much more cheaply.

To continue with musical activities after leaving an In Harmony primary school, young people need to have developed a love of music and a strong musical identity. This includes having friendships with like-minded others and having positive self-beliefs about their musical competencies (Hallam and Burns, 2018b). If these are not achieved by the end of primary school, young people are more likely to pursue alternative leisure or career paths. Although the In Harmony programs are at

different stages of development, the nature of the pedagogical approach adopted, the wide range of music learned and the sense of community engendered provides the basis for long term musical commitment to emerge in participating young people. However, other factors are also important as to whether musical opportunities are taken up.

In England, there are two points in time when motivation to continue with musical activities is vulnerable to discontinuation. The first, and in many ways the most crucial, is when children transfer to secondary school (see Hallam and Burns 2018b). This can be a traumatic experience for some children and represents a major change in their lives. It is a time when there are new opportunities, greater peer pressure and greater pressure on academic attainment (Galton and McLellan, 2017). For the children in In Harmony programs it is the time of the greatest challenge. At primary school, their musical activity is part of the curriculum and many may have viewed it as no different to other school subjects. On transfer to secondary school children enter an environment where, all too often, music is not valued, may hardly be in evidence in the curriculum and may not be available as a subject in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (see Hallam and Burns, 2018b for a review). The lack of importance placed on music by some schools may influence other children who may come to exert negative peer pressure in relation to musical activities, including playing an instrument which may be viewed as ‘classical’.

Those children engaged in In Harmony extra-curricular activities are more likely to wish to continue with their musical activities having already made a commitment to music, but they also face challenges. They may be isolated at secondary school, with no opportunities to continue with tuition and no extra-curricular musical activities. Even where tuition is available it may be too expensive for their parents to afford, while extra-curricular activities may not be appropriate for the instrument that they have spent the last six years learning to play. While attendance, with a scholarship at a specialist secondary music school seems to provide a solution to these challenges, the location of these schools in some cases made attendance unrealistic with families having limited funding for travel. In addition, not all schools with specialist music status have orchestral extra-curricular activities (see Hallam and Burns, 2018a).

To ensure continuation of engagement with music, given the wide variability of musical provision in secondary schools, many young people need to engage with extra-curricular activities. Some of the longer established In Harmony programs have developed high quality provision for young people, some of which is accessed by non-In Harmony children. Others have developed partnerships with other music organisations, frequently Music Hubs, which offered appropriate activities. It is clear that partnerships with other music organisations are essential to ensure appropriate and affordable progression routes and opportunities for attending holiday courses and participating in performances. The latter motivates young people, particularly when they are in prestigious locations. Also important are opportunities to engage with professional musicians, playing and communicating with them (see Hallam and Burns, 2018b).

Young people are more likely to continue engaging with musical activities if their parents are supportive. This can be a challenge in areas of high deprivation. The In Harmony programs support individual young people when parents are not engaged, often in difficult circumstances. Concerts play a major role in engaging parents but there are challenges in terms of transport and finding suitable venues. Many cannot afford lessons when their children transfer to secondary school and their home



accommodation is not always suitable for their children to practice or to store instruments. While programs support families with issues relating to transport and lessons, they have limited funding to enable them to do so. In England, the cost of lessons can be covered by schools making use of Pupil Premium funding (Culture White paper, 2016), but this happens infrequently (Sharp and Rabiasz, 2016). In the programs which have been running for longer periods of time, the focus on community involvement, in place when they were initiated, has remained. The musical skills of the young people are more advanced as they have been playing for longer and more local solutions to some of these problems have evolved, although some remain, for instance, where the religious convictions of families preclude their children's ongoing engagement with the In Harmony program when it is no longer a compulsory element of the curriculum.

The variability in the implementation of In Harmony, means it is not possible to draw conclusions about the particular practices which promote young people's continuing involvement with music as these vary depending on local circumstances. The variability of implementation of El Sistema and Sistema inspired programs internationally presents similar challenges. Some of the strategies adopted by the In Harmony programs may stimulate discussion amongst other programs as to whether it would be useful to adapt these strategies for their own circumstances. What is clear from the research, is that for young people from socio-economically deprived areas it is not sufficient to simply provide opportunities. Young people need to be encouraged to make active choices to take advantage of the available opportunities and require support in overcoming the many barriers that they face including lack of funding to pay for tuition, the purchase of instruments, issues relating to transport and knowledge about career opportunities. Strategies must be in place to break down the barriers and ensure that provision is accessible and active choice is possible.

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