



# MUSIC OF LIFE

Impact Report

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2019-20

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# Welcome from the CEO

I am delighted to introduce the Music of Life Impact Report for the academic year 2019-20. The year saw unprecedented events, with families with disabled children so much more affected than many others. As a consequence, the demand for high quality and accessible music educational activities has been higher than ever. Music of Life was able to adapt quickly when lockdown started in the Spring of 2020, which enabled us to continue to provide much-needed support and access to musical activities for children from some of the most vulnerable families.

This year's report doesn't feature some of our usual statistics, for example attainment and qualifications for our Individual Lessons Programme, since both lessons and exams were suspended for half of the year. But it is still full of the excitement and joy that music brings into the lives of our students, along with the brilliant insights of some of our teachers and partners.

We were lucky enough to make it to the Royal Albert Hall just before the lockdown in a partnership project with Camden Music Service. Students from Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children took part in a massed performance that brought together all Camden schools, Camden Music Service youth ensembles and musicians of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. This bi-annual event is a fantastic affirmation of the power and potential of our Music for Deaf Children programme as well as a great opportunity for everyone involved in the event to learn more about Music and Deafness through preparing together and sharing the platform.

Towards the end of the academic year we held our first Online Conference that brought together key Music of Life workshop leaders and teachers, experts in music education for special needs children, and existing and prospective project partners. It enabled us to share some unique experiences accumulated over 16 years of our work and announce the launch of our first ever Teacher Training programme.

The Teacher Training programme will see 10 young music practitioners training with our senior programme leaders during the academic year 2020-21, building their confidence through hands-on experience in delivering Music of Life programmes in special needs schools. As a result we will significantly increase our capacity to run Music of Life projects in more schools and support local music education services in making their services more accessible for families with disabled children.



**Maria Teterina, Chief Executive**



# Music of Life

The charity was established in 2003 and since then has supported over 3,000 children. Our vision is of a world where disabled children and young people have the same access to music-making as any other child. Through long-term engagement, the children experience the joy of making music, which positively impacts their academic performance, social life and health. Their schools, families and local communities also benefit from the improved health and well-being of the children.

We support children and young people aged 5 to 25 with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities, both individually and in group workshops in special needs schools. When they are ready, we help them to integrate into community-based activities such as joining a youth choir or playing in a band, which helps to widen their social circles and gain acceptance from their non-disabled peers. It also helps non-disabled groups learn how to accommodate the needs of our students and to value their contribution.



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## **Our vision**

Our vision is for all disabled children and young people to be able to access, and benefit from, music-making opportunities

## **Our mission**

Our mission is to build and strengthen the life skills, well-being and confidence of disabled children and young people through music making

## **Our programmes**

Choirs at Special Schools  
Music for Deaf Children  
Individual Music Lessons  
Community Integration















# 6,204

individual music opportunities provided by Music of Life in the 2019-20 academic year before lockdown

# 6,086

the number of times our educational videos were viewed between March and July 2020

 <p>9:50</p>	 <p>8:58</p>	 <p>11:22</p>	 <p>10:30</p>	 <p>8:19</p>
<b>Clip 8 Pitch part 2 by Ruth Montgomery</b> 61 views • 2 months ago	<b>Clip 8 Early Years Foundation Stage Music with Ruth...</b> 140 views • 2 months ago	<b>Music of Life - 'The Weather' (BSL/English Voiceover/CC)</b> 286 views • 2 months ago <a href="#">Subtitles</a>	<b>Music of Life - 'Give Us Hope' with Suzzie, Suzie and Emma</b> 54 views • 2 months ago	<b>Clip 7 EYFS Songs told in British Sign Language</b> 35 views • 2 months ago
 <p>7:25</p>	 <p>6:32</p>	 <p>13:13</p>	 <p>7:13</p>	 <p>7:02</p>
<b>Clip 7 Music in BSL for Nursery children</b> 26 views • 2 months ago	<b>Clip 7 Pitch, high/low treble and bass clef Music in BSL</b> 40 views • 2 months ago	<b>Music of Life 'We Are Family' with Suzie, Emma and Suzzie</b> 97 views • 2 months ago	<b>Clip 6 Nursery music in BSL</b> 38 views • 3 months ago	<b>Clip 6 Reception Music in BSL Counting and Action...</b> 31 views • 3 months ago

# 2019-20 academic year in numbers

**394**

Direct beneficiaries



**1,224**

1:1 Music lessons



**68**

Students receiving  
1:1 lessons

**345**

Students attending  
group sessions

**171**

Workshops in  
special needs schools

**3**

Partnership projects

**62**

Performances

## Activities during lockdown

**90**

1:1 Online music  
lessons

**60**

Bespoke educational  
video tutorials

## 2019-20 in numbers (continued)

### Our beneficiaries' conditions\*

Autistic spectrum disorders	48%
Deaf / Hard of hearing	37%
Blind / Visually impaired	12%
Down's syndrome	9%
Cerebral palsy	12%
Other learning disabilities	22%
Other physical disabilities	12%
Beneficiaries on pupil premium	76%

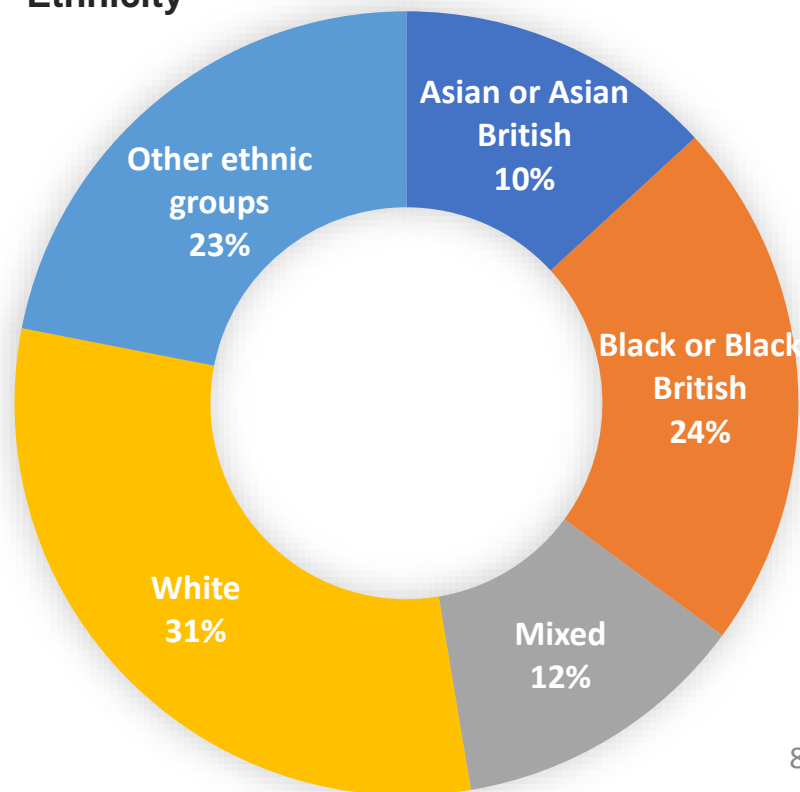
\*Many of our students have more than one condition, therefore the total above exceeds 100%



### Summary of music provision

<b>242</b> Voice	<b>27</b> Strings
<b>14</b> Keyboard	<b>20</b> Wind
<b>5</b> Music technology	<b>86</b> Percussion/Other

### Ethnicity





*“What a wonderful group of people you are and what wonderful students you have. Mia’s smile while she was singing her solo is something I will never forget.”*

**Local music service education team member (partnership project at Royal Albert Hall)**





# Individual Lessons Programme

**Music of Life provides weekly 1:1 music tuition on a wide range of instruments and music styles.**

**Our lessons are delivered in various settings:**

- Schools where we run choirs
- Schools for Deaf children as part of the music curriculum
- In partnership with local music services
- In partnership with other organisations, such as youth ensembles
- By individual arrangement



# Insight from a teacher



I'm Suzie Purkis and I teach singing at a school where we also run the choir. Every week nine students aged 11-17, who are also members of the choir, come for their individual lessons with me in the school music room where I accompany them on an electric piano.

The students are selected to have one-to-one lessons based on various factors. Some because they show a particular aptitude for singing and performing, others because they demonstrate exceptional enthusiasm for music and others still because they love the choir and benefit from having a little extra individual attention to help with learning melodies and words – and sometimes all of these!

My own training and vocal education is rooted in classical singing. The work I do with the students is grounded in this, and we focus on posture, breathing, improving tone quality and finding vocal freedom. Some of the students have also begun to read music while others focus more on remembering the songs we sing in the choir. The progress some of the students make is tremendous: students who I am told have an extremely short attention span and quite problematic behaviour during ordinary school lesson time will focus throughout the choir session and even memorise lengthy, fairly complicated solo songs.

It takes an attitude of open-mindedness and exploration to keep adapting my approach and working out what suits the students in order to keep challenging them to be the best they can be. In fact, this teaching has really informed the teaching I do in mainstream schools and elsewhere because, of course, that is what all students need – for someone to understand them and empathise with what they bring to the lesson each week.

When the students have just had a singing lesson, they arrive at choir rehearsals with a real sense of ownership and responsibility, ready to support and encourage the rest of the choir with their confidence and enthusiasm. The individual lessons feed into nurturing and raising the standard of the choir, and of course the singing students gain additional musical skills by singing in a choir as well as singing solo. It's a wonderful set-up which benefits so many, and of course it's one of the highlights of my week!

*'One of the challenges I have found in doing this work is making sure that I really tune in to what these students are capable of and don't allow whatever their particular need is to put a cap on what they might achieve.'*



**The Individual Lessons Programme** caters for children with a wide range of conditions, including deafness, autism, visual impairments and severe learning difficulties as well as those who are deaf-blind or have multiple disorders. Often they have no prior experience of music when we first meet them.

Consequently, the range of challenges our teachers are tackling is as wide as the range of abilities we are striving to nurture and support.



### **Improved learning skills**

Young people develop skills that contribute to improved literacy, language, numeracy, planning and problem solving and an enhanced ability to absorb and process information. They develop a better memory and a greater ability to concentrate, to approach tasks creatively and to work independently.



### **Reduced social isolation**

Music lessons help improve social skills, the ability to communicate and work in ensembles as well as creating opportunities for children to engage in group activities and make friends.

### **Improved emotional well-being**

Music lessons help increase confidence, resilience and motivation. They improve the ability to manage feelings, emotions and behaviour, and develop empathy, self-awareness and self-advocacy.



## Summary of feedback from 22 teachers, 40 parents and 62 students receiving individual lessons

### Improved learning skills – reported by **84%** of parents and teachers

- Improved word recognition, better information processing – music supports language development through words and phrases used in songs and the sense of starting and ending a tune
- Improved numeracy – through learning and recognising rhythmical patterns and music time signatures
- Expanded vocabulary – as students learn the words of songs, participate in musical games and discuss new topics with their teachers
- Significant improvement in concentration and listening ability – this is a particularly valuable skill that students take back to their classroom, which has been repeatedly noted and praised by many of their non-music teachers
- Improved ability to work independently – many teachers and parents are delighted to report how willingly and enthusiastically the students practice independently between the lessons

### Reduced social isolation – reported by **89%** of all respondents

- Lessons enable students to participate in youth music groups and ensembles
- Over time, engagement levels improve both in music lessons and other activities
- Students become more willing to communicate with other people including someone new, which for some children is a huge development
- They are better able to form and maintain friendships

### Improved emotional well-being – reported by **94%** of all respondents

The most common observation from teachers and parents is that the students benefit emotionally and their ability to manage their negative feelings grows. Music eases frustration and phobias and reduces aggressiveness and the sense of loneliness. As students' confidence grows, they become more aware of their own and other people's feelings and learn how to deal with them using their newly found skills.





# Music for Deaf Children

**Music for Deaf children in London is currently our fastest-growing programme designed and delivered by professional Deaf musicians.**

It includes:

- Classroom provision
- Working in small groups with activities tailored very specifically for the needs of each age group
- 1:1 instrument tuition for KS2 students – currently on piano, woodwind, percussion and string instruments
- Support for schools to enable Deaf students' participation in major music partnership projects





# Insight from the programme leader

My name is Ruth Montgomery and I am a Deaf musician.

I studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama for my music degree doing a wide range of music subjects, with the flute my specialist performing subject. Since graduation over 15 years ago, I have been working in all kinds of educational settings, doing 1-1 and group teaching for all ages, levels and abilities.

Sadly, in many schools for Deaf children music only comes in the form of one-off workshops. While they are great for short bursts, nothing can compare with weekly lessons for Deaf children.

With Music of Life, my colleague Eloise Garland and I are able to visit schools and work with Deaf children on a weekly basis. The main focus is on language development through songs, so I begin this with Early Years children as it is important to lay the foundations for communication. There are counting songs, props, visual pictures, actions and sign language. The wonderful thing about songs is their predictive nature – a lot of them are repetitive, fun and easy to remember. The children start to have their favourites and ask for more. Music provides emotional, social and language development, so the Early Years foundation stages depend on that.

As we move on to Primary Years we work on rhythmic timing, structuring and the elements of music. As a Deaf musician myself, I know that so long as I know how music is read and played, it supports my listening senses. So the teaching is very much based on empathy and my passion to see them enjoy and thrive in those activities.

Every child I teach has their own individual hearing level – some are mildly Deaf, some are severe, and some are profound. Some wear hearing aids, some don't. The main thing is that I work on developing their musicality, through visual resources and showing them how things are done. Classroom working and demonstrations are the best way of doing this.

My rapport with the heads, teachers, teacher assistants and admin staff are all very important. This shows young people that we are all in this together, and I have been very lucky to have their support and involvement. They allow me to use the walls in the classroom to display work. In that way it becomes a reminder of what they have learned and that music is a 'normal' part of their school life.



In the 2019-20 academic year, Music of Life provided tailored music programmes designed by Ruth Montgomery and delivered by Ruth and Eloise Garland, the Deaf musician, teacher and Deaf awareness campaigner, in the following schools:

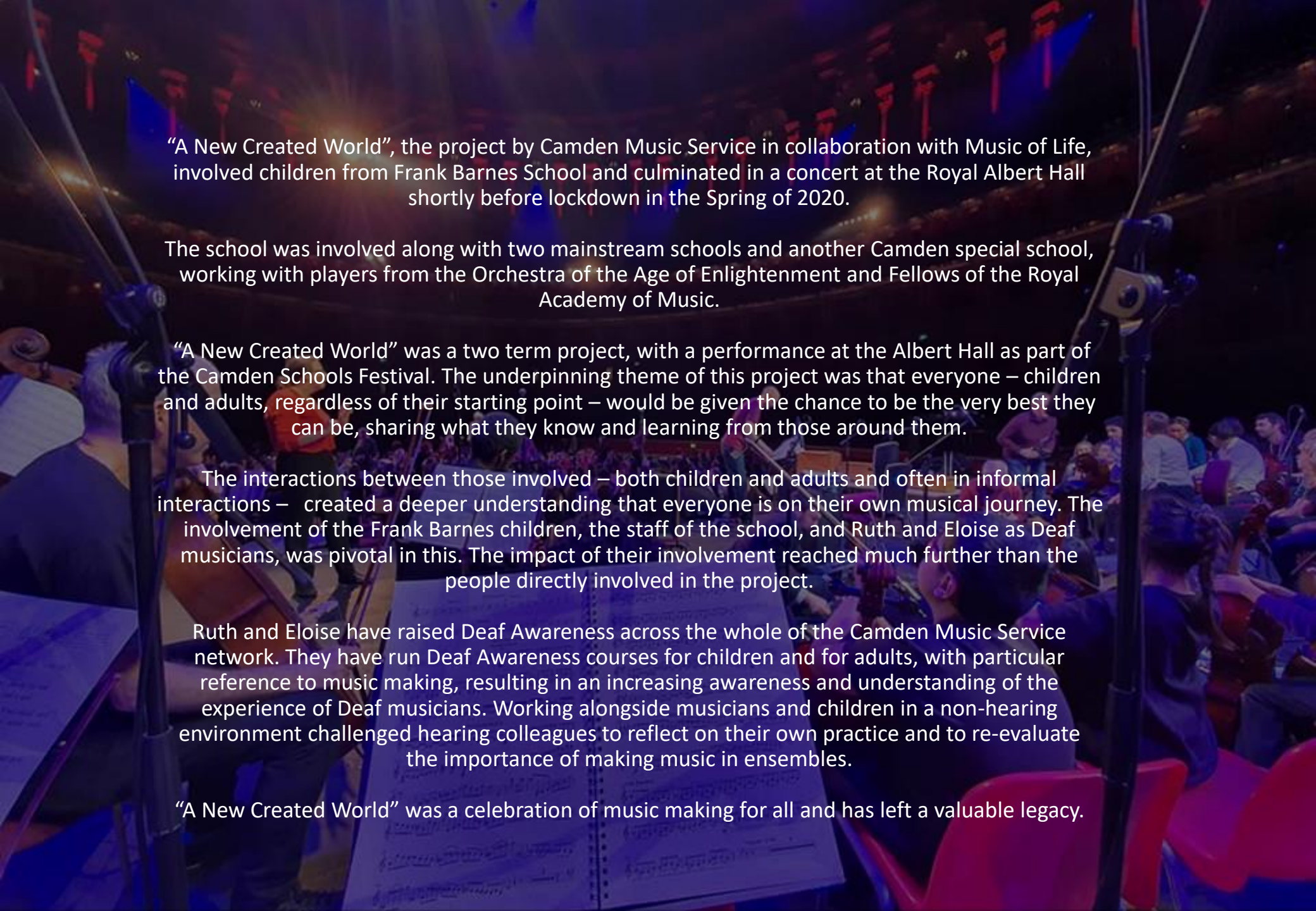
- Frank Barnes School for Deaf children
- Gifford Primary School (Deaf and Hard of Hearing unit)
- Roding Primary School (Deaf and Hard of Hearing unit)
- Blanche Neville School for Deaf children

*“I would like to thank Music of Life for their amazing work, for their support of music making at Frank Barnes School and for their continuing partnership with the Camden Music Service.*

*The involvement of Ruth and Eloise as Deaf musicians and music educators has raised music provision at Frank Barnes School to an entirely different level.”*

Sheena Masson, the Primary Music Coordinator, Camden Music Service





“A New Created World”, the project by Camden Music Service in collaboration with Music of Life, involved children from Frank Barnes School and culminated in a concert at the Royal Albert Hall shortly before lockdown in the Spring of 2020.

The school was involved along with two mainstream schools and another Camden special school, working with players from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Fellows of the Royal Academy of Music.

“A New Created World” was a two term project, with a performance at the Albert Hall as part of the Camden Schools Festival. The underpinning theme of this project was that everyone – children and adults, regardless of their starting point – would be given the chance to be the very best they can be, sharing what they know and learning from those around them.

The interactions between those involved – both children and adults and often in informal interactions – created a deeper understanding that everyone is on their own musical journey. The involvement of the Frank Barnes children, the staff of the school, and Ruth and Eloise as Deaf musicians, was pivotal in this. The impact of their involvement reached much further than the people directly involved in the project.

Ruth and Eloise have raised Deaf Awareness across the whole of the Camden Music Service network. They have run Deaf Awareness courses for children and for adults, with particular reference to music making, resulting in an increasing awareness and understanding of the experience of Deaf musicians. Working alongside musicians and children in a non-hearing environment challenged hearing colleagues to reflect on their own practice and to re-evaluate the importance of making music in ensembles.

“A New Created World” was a celebration of music making for all and has left a valuable legacy.





## Choirs at Special Needs Schools

Choirs at special schools have been running in the West Midlands since 2014. The project is an ongoing programme of weekly choral workshops delivered by a team of professional musicians.

Choir sizes range from 20 to 60 students, with choral workshops joined by many of the school staff. It's a very "all together now!" approach and a lot of fun.



In 2019-20 Music of Life provided weekly choral workshops at three schools:

- Round Oak Special School, Warwick
- Selly Oak Special School, Birmingham
- Woodlands Special School, Coleshill

The planned programme expansion in 2020 had to be delayed due to Covid-19, so instead the workshop leaders created weekly interactive video singing lessons that Music of Life supplied to keep the children engaged at home.

*“The Music of Life experience evolves each week and depends on how the pupils are responding and what their needs are but it is the professionalism and talent of the workshop leaders that really make things happen. The pupils are exploring and developing skills, reaching potential they probably didn’t even realise they had, with the high expectations set by the workshop leaders, the staff and the pupils themselves making it a truly wonderful experience.”*

Lizzie Godwin, Assistant Head, Woodlands Special School



# Insight from the pianist

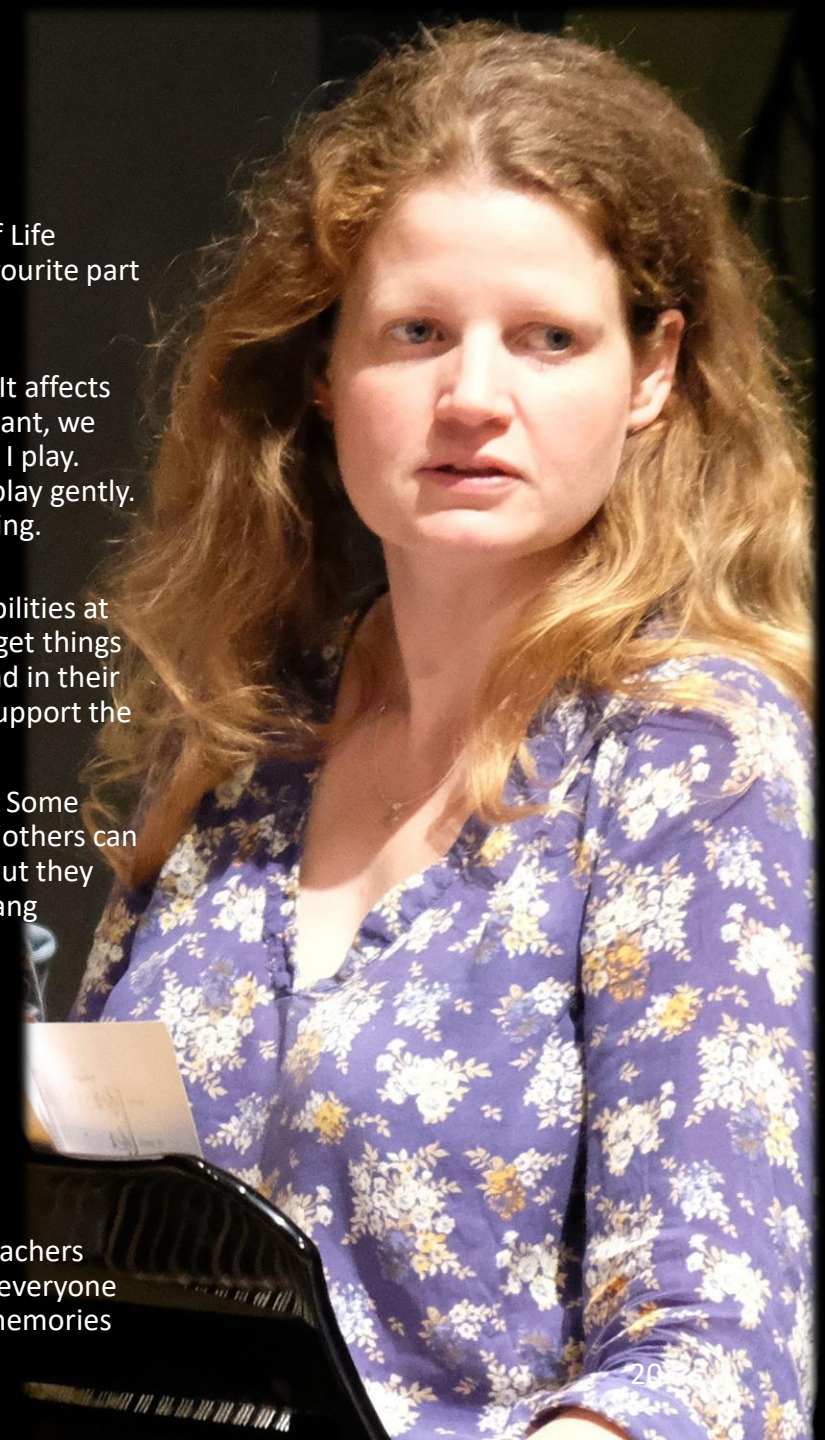
I'm Emma Cockbill and I've worked in music education for almost 25 years as a class teacher, instrumental teacher, performer and choir/drama leader. I've been involved with the Music of Life choral workshops as a pianist for just over three years now and it very quickly became the favourite part of my week. It is also the place where I have learned the most!

Using a live piano accompaniment is one of the things that makes our sessions really special. It affects the mood of the room, either increasing the energy level or encouraging calm. Equally important, we can use live music to help attention and focus. Whilst everyone is arriving and getting settled, I play. When the leader is introducing a song or reminding people of the words and structure, I can play gently. This works as a little reminder of the songs we are doing and helps those who may be struggling.

With this combined approach, we are able to keep the sessions relevant to a wide-range of abilities at all times. I also act as fall guy for the session leaders, showing that it is OK to make mistakes, get things wrong, or struggle to think of an idea. It is very important that we teach the children to be kind in their responses to each other and to be brave in their choices with their music making. I can also support the session leaders with praise and encouragement of both individuals and the group as a whole.

One really important aspect of what we do is to encourage solo singing and personal choices. Some children may be non-verbal, they might choose from Makaton symbol books, some may sign, others can sing really confidently. Some may need a lot of time and some support to make their choice but they are all equally important. If we sang with a backing track, this just wouldn't work. And if we sang without any music, we would have prolonged periods of silence, which could be so stressful for the person trying to choose and perhaps boring for others in the room. I can carry on playing gently, keeping the focus of the room on the song we are doing, but hopefully not putting any pressure on the person who's turn it is. It also means we can very quickly get the whole room back singing again together once that solo moment is over.

The progress we see with children is phenomenal. And in some ways it seems that by being part of a group, something inclusive, they are freer to grow and develop even more than if they had one-to-one attention. There is less risk and lots of reward. The atmosphere in the sessions is unique – it genuinely feels as if we are a whole team together, the students, the teachers and us. Everyone contributes to the overall energy and emotional uplift, and when we finish, everyone feels inspired. There is not a single session that goes on without us taking away very special memories of something incredible.



“Music of Life may be a small charity but its impact is huge”



Lizzie Godwin, Assistant Head, Woodlands Special School, July 2020

“We value music immensely at Woodlands. It’s important for everyone’s enjoyment and wellbeing and it should be accessible to all. Music of Life brings the opportunity for our school to have a fully inclusive choir. Anyone who wants to be involved can be. The youngest pupils in our choir are 5 and the oldest 19. The range of abilities and needs is vast but they are all included. We have pupils who sing everything; some who join in with the songs that they choose; others who like to move to the music; and those who make choices using alternative communication such as symbols or Makaton signing. Pupils join in at their own level, whatever they are comfortable with. And if they need to leave the room, they can; if they can only cope with 10 minutes of the session, that’s fine.

Music of Life is totally inclusive. It is one of the only times in school that we have pupils from across the school choosing to work together and enjoy each other’s company. The Music of Life sessions have helped to develop an identity for those involved in it and the relationships between the pupils, the staff, the workshop leaders and, importantly, the audience.

The sessions bring so much: the sense of community for both pupils and adults in the choir; the participation; the collaboration, both working together in school and with the other schools; the opportunities for the pupils to perform, when the parents get to see and hear them, not something that is always available to children with additional needs. We believe it to be very important and strive for it to happen but we do know that it’s not always the case. Music of Life brings that to our children. We passionately believe that young people should be given lots of choice in their life and through many of the different songs and activities they get to choose and take the songs further, so in their own way they are doing some composition.”



# Lockdown 2020

Music of Life is privileged to work with outstanding musicians and individuals. As a team, we were able to adapt to remote provision within a matter of days and carried on with the work of inspiring and nurturing the students through the production of weekly high-quality educational music materials that were referred to as “the best free educational lockdown resources available” by the parents.

Over 60 videos were created and uploaded to our YouTube channel and distributed to the schools between March and July 2020. This way of working will continue so long as schools are unable to invite music practitioners back in person.

In July we held our first online conference that brought together key Music of Life workshop leaders and teachers, experts in music education for special needs children, existing and prospective project partners. Recorded and fully subtitled, it is now available on our YouTube channel providing an excellent opportunity to learn about the scope of the organisation, its unique experience and knowledge. The speakers include Music of Life Patron Denise Leigh, programme leaders, project partners and direct beneficiaries.



Music of Life - 'In The Garden' - BSL/English Voiceover/CC

671 views • May 6, 2020

21 0 SHARE SAVE ...

# Organisational Summary

A copy of the full 2019 Report and Accounts can be obtained from [www.musicoflife.org.uk](http://www.musicoflife.org.uk), the Charity Commission or Companies House. Registered Charity number 1102827; Company number 4963498

## **Patrons**

Evelyn Glennie CH, DBE  
Denise Leigh  
John Lubbock OBE

## **Trustees**

Ray Longbottom (Chair), Catherine Clarke (Vice Chair), Sarah Kolkman (Treasurer), Robert Blencowe, Eleanor Chuck, Harvey Jones, Clare Salters, Jeff Sutherland-Kay

## **Team**

Maria Teterina, Chief Executive  
Suzzie Vango, Head of Choirs at Special Schools programme  
Ruth Montgomery, Music for Deaf Children programme leader  
Suzie Purkis, Emma Cockbill, Eloise Garland – workshop leaders  
Birgitta Clift, Fundraiser  
Shruti Soni, Accountant  
Silvia Epure, Social Media Producer (volunteer role)  
>50 music teachers and support musicians

## **Our delivery partners**

Birmingham Services for Education  
Camden Music Services, London  
DaDa Youth Ensemble, Liverpool



# Music of Life Foundation statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2019

		2019		
	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2019 £
<b>Income from</b>				
Donations	2	67,715	140,283	207,998
<b>Total income</b>		<u>67,715</u>	<u>140,283</u>	<u>207,998</u>
<b>Expenditure on</b>				
Raising funds		16,060	-	16,060
Charitable activities		18,183	87,791	105,974
<b>Total expenditure</b>	3	<u>34,243</u>	<u>87,791</u>	<u>122,034</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		33,472	52,492	85,964
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward		20,348	34,515	54,863
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	9	<u>53,820</u>	<u>87,007</u>	<u>140,827</u>

Note: Some of the funding received in 2019 is for 2020 activities

# Thank you

**With no public or statutory funding, we rely entirely on donations from individuals, trusts and foundations to support our work. The generosity of our benefactors helps us to ensure the sustainability and further development of our long-term programmes during this challenging period in the funding of music education.**

## Supporters of our work in the 2019-20 academic year:

- Arts Council England
- Ashfords Foundation
- Baron Davenport's Charity
- BBC Children in Need
- City of London Covid-19 Emergency Fund
- Dumbreck Charity
- Gowling WLG Trust
- Grey Court Trust
- Hopkins Sayer Trust
- Ironmongers Company
- Leathersellers Company
- Norton Foundation
- Pamela Barlow Charitable Trust
- Philip Bates Trust
- Roger and Douglas Turner Trust
- Sobell Foundation
- The Black Heart Foundation
- The Childwick Trust
- The Claude Ballard Southall Memorial Charity
- The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
- The Eveson Charitable Trust
- The John Avins Trust
- The Marchus Trust
- The Mercers' Charitable Foundation
- The Rotary Club of Birmingham Endowment Trust
- The Shirley and Ian Watson Charitable Trust
- The Sir James Roll Charitable Trust
- The Loveday Charitable Trust
- Sanford Charitable Trust
- Sir John Sumner's Trust
- Sobell Foundation
- Souter Charitable Trust
- Warwick Relief in Need Charity
- Mr B Short
- Ms Marilyn Vincent
- Mrs K Puffett
- Mr and Mrs Bennett
- Mr M J Crane Q.C.



## Support us

You can donate to Music of Life on our website <http://musicoflife.org.uk/support-our-work/donate-to-our-work/donate-online/>. If you would like to find out more about how to support our work, including sponsoring a student or a school, please contact Maria Teterina, Chief Executive at [mteterina@mofl.co.uk](mailto:mteterina@mofl.co.uk) or by calling 020 7813 5472

## Contact us

### Music of Life Foundation

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Web: [www.musicoflife.org.uk](http://www.musicoflife.org.uk)

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