

Is there a place for teaching music
within the outdoor environment?



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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter outlines the aims for the research project, explains the context of which the research took place and explains the choice of focus through a rationale.

1.1 Aims

Three aims have been developed to help aid this research project to remain focussed. These aims are:

Aim 1 – To develop an understanding of how music and the outdoors are currently taught and used in the primary school.

Aim 2 – To observe and evaluate the teaching strategies and engagement of children during a music lesson using both the indoor and outside environments.

Aim 3 – To identify whether there is a place for using the outdoor environment to teach music to children in the primary school.

1.2 Rationale

As part of the module 'The Principles of Practice and Progress' at the start of the third year of the degree, a professional panel was organised by module coordinators consisting of several guest speakers. One of which was Mr Mark Jennings who spoke of his experiences working as a peripatetic teacher for the Carmarthenshire Music Service. A wide range of research has suggested that music has an important part to play to support and enhance many aspects of learning (Adams and Beauchamp, 2018, Daubney and Fautley, 2018 and Custodero, 2011). Additionally, empirical research has suggested that there are many opposing thoughts and opinions regarding music in the primary school. As an interested musician, it seems relevant to explore the impact that music can have on the health and wellbeing of children within the primary school and how it could influence them to improve, develop and succeed. Later into the year, it was announced that research for this project would be undertaken at School A, which was found to have a strength in outdoor learning. As a result, with the

guidance of Heddwen Davies, the supervisor of this project, it was decided that the project would inquire into the question of whether music can be taught using the outdoor environment in the primary school. Thus, combining a strong interest of the author and a strength of the school of research.

Wide research has been carried out into the importance of music education (Heimonen, 2003, Nardo et al., 2006, and DfE, 2011) as it is thought to be significant for promoting “learners’ health and wellbeing” in addition to being continually integral to the development of children’s “imagination and creativity across the curriculum” (DCELLS, 2008, p.8). Additionally, Schauble and Glaser (1996) and Suttie (2018) have found in their research that outdoor education is currently becoming more prevalent in education. The Welsh Assembly Government has found the use of the outdoor environment to have a significant impact on “children’s wellbeing and their personal and social development” (Maynard and Waters, 2007, p.255). Thus, most research into the teaching of music and the use of the outdoors for learning, separately enforce the importance of them and their strengths to children’s learning in addition to their health and wellbeing. However, there is little research for the combination of music and outdoor learning and whether it can be used effectively in the primary school. Therefore, this project seeks to explore whether the two can be combined to deliver music lessons in the outdoor environment.

1.3 Context

The primary research carried out to inform this project was carried out at P Primary School during the ‘electives fortnight’ as part of ‘The Reflective Practitioner’ module. A summary of findings presented to the school at the end of the fortnight can be found in Appendix 1. P Primary does not have a significant strength in its delivery of music, which meant it was often a limited subject to be witnessed throughout the school. However, all opportunities were taken to observe all the music lessons that were planned for the duration of the time at the school in a range of your groups from Nursery to Year 6. On the other hand, P Primary does have a strength in their use of the outdoor environment. They were recently asked by Estyn following their inspection to prepare a case study on their “purposeful use of the outdoor areas” which is still yet to be published (Estyn, 2018, p.3). For this reason, this research will implement the

use of the outdoors as it coincides with similar responses of music from learners regarding their health and wellbeing as well as their enjoyment of these two areas.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Chapter two consists of a review of literature in relation to the teaching of music and the use of the outdoor environment in the primary school. This review was undertaken to ensure a secure and rich understanding of relevant theory and research in readiness for consideration in the research project.

2.1 Status of music in the primary school

Music was introduced to education as a provision of the Education Reform Act 1988 as a foundation subject (HMSO, 1988, p.2) and became statutory in 1992 (Ofsted, 1993). Whilst some believe that music is only for those who play an instrument or receive private tuition (Lamont et al. 2003) the creative development report (DCELLS, 2008) wishes to reinforce the importance of music being accessible for all pupils to participate and engage in. Currently, music is becoming more prevalent with the implementation of the new curriculum through the recommended Expressive Arts area of learning within the Successful Futures report (Donaldson, 2015). Thus, stating the importance of children being confident individuals who can express their “ideas and emotions through different media” (Donaldson, 2015 p.31). In support of developing the new Expressive Arts area of learning within the new curriculum The Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, has confirmed a £3 million injection to education to improve “music education in schools across Wales” (Welsh Government, 2018).

A range of current research considers the importance of music, along with the other areas of the creative and expressive arts (Holt, 1997, Griffiths, 2010 and Fancourt, 2014). Many of whom share a similar thought of how music holds an important place in the development of creativity and how it helps to develop children’s health and wellbeing. Research over the past 16 years examines the benefits of interventions on children’s health and wellbeing (MacDonald, 2013). Research carried out by MacDonald et al (2013, p.158) has included a range of activities that aim to explore children’s creativity whilst having a target of remaining “enjoyable, accessible and having a significant impact” on children’s health and wellbeing indicators. Through different activities, it is therefore important that children can create and perform a piece

of music which expresses themselves and their feelings without feeling vulnerable or having to discuss their thoughts directly with someone and being a source for personal fulfilment to help improve their wellbeing.

A lack of teacher confidence in teaching music means that the delivery of music lessons in some primary school is limited (DfE, 2011). This is because some teachers believe they have a lack of subject knowledge or skills as they are unable to play an instrument. Additionally, some teachers report that they feel unconfident when delivering a music lesson as their subject knowledge of music and the elements of music is not of a high standard. It has been suggested that some teachers often do not attempt to deliver music sessions as they do not want to teach something that they are not familiar with. Therefore, they develop a barrier to their confidence in delivering music (Daubney and Fautley, 2018). Although teachers as “competent adults” can deliver the basic skills covered within the music curriculum, they avoid the delivery of music in class as they do not feel capable in their knowledge and understanding to deliver an effective lesson. Research finds that teachers avoid music lessons as they cause “chaos” in the classroom preventing the children from learning and disrupting other classes (DfE, 2011 and Adams and Beauchamp, 2018). Furthermore, some teachers disregard music lessons and have it taught by outside agencies or by a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) during class teachers’ planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time (Glover and Ward, 1998, p.3). Glover and Young (1998, p.17) agree that teachers “under-value” their own abilities and creativity in the delivery of music and as a result avoid it as they are unsure as to what they are “trying to foster or how to do it”.

2.2 Status of the outdoor environment in the primary school

Outdoor learning can be described as an umbrella term for any outside activity that develops children’s knowledge through “adventurous activities, environmental education, team challenges or a playground game” (Robertson, 2015, p.2). Outdoor learning should develop children in readiness for life in the ‘real-world’ (Grigg and Lewis, 2016) which in turn, helps prepare them to meet the aims of the new curriculum set out in Donaldson’s (2015, p.29) ‘Successful Futures’ report to become ready “to play a full part in life and work”. The outdoor environment can be “interpreted and

created” in such a way to meet the needs of the individual learners (Constable and Green, 2017, p.5.).

“When given the choice, the outdoors is where most children want to be” (White, 2014, p.2). There is no argument from current research to suggest that children do not enjoy being outdoors. They do prefer to spend their time outside in the natural environment rather than in a classroom situation. Additionally, some research finds (Grigg and Lewis, 2016 and White, 2014) that being outside gives teachers the opportunity to reignite their passion for teaching by observing and engaging with the children’s enthusiasm towards their learning whilst outdoors. Hansard (2010, cited in Grigg and Lewis, 2016, p.29) finds that some teachers prefer to spend time outdoors as it removes them from the constraints of the classroom’s four walls which can make them feel claustrophobic. Teaching outside also allows the teachers to “try new approaches” using the environment around them.

The Successful Futures report (Donaldson, 2015, p.45) states the importance of children experiencing “social, emotional and physical wellbeing” to help them “thrive and engage successfully” with their learning. Thus, the wellbeing of children becoming an important aspect to be considered in every lesson. A growing amount of literature is supporting the thinking that the outdoor environment has a positive impact on the wellbeing of children (Robertson, 2015 and Gleave, 2009). The National Assembly for Wales (2019, p.22) finds that the wellbeing of children requires greater support. As a result, the Welsh Network for Healthy Schools has been established to help this requirement with the Welsh Government injecting £2.3 million into the support. Pryor et al (2005) and Donaldson (2015) suggest the importance of children’s well-being and how the environment in which the curriculum is delivered needs to be designed in a way which will ensure pupils are in a content state where they are willing and ready to learn. Rose and Rogers (2012, p.6) support that the outdoor environment “stimulates children’s creativity” which has been found to have a positive influence on children’s well-being (Hatwood, 2016 and Grigg, 2014).

In opposition to the use of the outdoor environment, Wilhelmsson (2012), Dowdell et al (2011), Charles et al (2008) and Gill (2007) suggest that teachers avoid the use of the outdoor environment due to the inconveniences of preparing and setting up resources that run the risk of being destroyed in the weather. Furthermore,

consideration of health and safety risks and the belief that children are more likely to injure themselves whilst in the outdoor environment than when they are contained in the classroom. In addition to this, the HCESC (2005) found that teachers are often unable to use the outdoor environment because they do not have access to a suitable environment within the school grounds as school environments are “becoming increasingly devoid of opportunities to access nature” (Dowdell et al. 2011, p.24). However, Staempfli (2009) suggests that even when schools do have an extensive range of facilities to use outside, the use of the areas is restricted by governments due to safety regulations. Teachers also avoid the use of the outdoor environment as they find they are able to deliver a lesson with just as much value, if not more, using the resources readily available in the classroom (Charles et al. 2008).

2.3 Status of music in the outdoor environment

Whilst literature is currently limited in the area of developing music through the use of the outdoor environment, the aim of this research project is to combine the two areas to answer the question previously set out to find if there is a place for music in the outdoor environment. Research does suggest that education in the outdoor environment should provide children with extensive opportunities and freedom to develop their creativity and one's expressions (Euston, 1976, p. 4 cited in Lyons, 1990, p.23). Thus, combining the benefits of the outdoor environment to help develop children's creativity and expressions through music education. Brown (2010, p.24) enforces the importance that teachers and other adults “should adopt an enabling attitude towards outdoor learning” to develop children's expression and creative capabilities through the development of music. As previously mentioned, Adams and Beauchamp (2018) found that teachers avoid delivering music lessons due to the noise levels and disruptions to others. Adams and Beauchamp (2018) and Brown (2010) suggest how the use of the outdoor environment can remove this barrier to the delivery of music lessons as the noise will not be contained within the school building.

However, research by Lyons (1990) does contradict Glover and Ward (1998) in the previously mentioned idea that all adults have the ability to deliver a successful music lesson. To successfully develop a music session the facilitator should have a sound knowledge of the objectives of the lesson and be confident in the delivery of music

within the classroom before being able to adapt these to be successful in the outdoor environment. Whilst Estyn's (2011) evaluation on outdoor learning suggests that only a few practitioners found that the outdoor environment developed children's creativity, Estyn does still suggest that the outdoors offers extended opportunities to improve standards in music.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Chapter three outlines and justifies the range of methods that were used throughout the research project and how ethical considerations were carried out.

3.1 Ethical Considerations

All research was carried out after receiving ethical approval from Dr S. V. Hughes. Evidence of the authorised ethical approval can be found in Appendix 2. Any participants over 18 who were interviewed or carried out questionnaires were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3) to consent to their engagement in the research project. However, as well as a signed consent form from parents or guardians, participants under 18 years old were interviewed or asked to carry out activities. Verbal consent was approved by these participants before continuing with any research. The participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time and were given opportunities for on-going consent throughout the interviews. All participants were informed of the reason for the research and informed that anything provided would remain anonymous within the findings. During the process of providing information, participants were made aware that they could remove their work at any point with no consequence. However, due to anonymity, once their work had been submitted, there would be no way of removing it as there was no way of identifying them. This could potentially have been overcome by asking the participants to provide a four-digit code on their work, which only they would know. Therefore, if they decided to remove their work from the research, they could have provided the four-digit code and this work could have been removed.

3.2 Methodology

To gather information to inform this writing, a number of methods were used. These include observations, questionnaires and interviews with both pupils and staff within the primary school. Briggs et al (2014, p.76) state the importance of gathering a range of information and data to create a qualitative argument allowing “reliability, validity and triangulation” in the work. The aim of this research was to understand the thoughts

of pupils and staff on the idea of combining music and the outdoor environment and to get an understanding of how they believed this would benefit or hinder their learning and delivery.

Additionally, the researcher set out to observe the difference between children's learning within music lessons held inside and outside the traditional classroom focusing on the engagement and behavioural differences between the two lessons to find out if there was a place for the music to be taught outside and whether it enhanced pupils' learning or not. The teacher and children were aware of why they were being observed, and what sort of things were being noted. All participants involved in the observed lessons were made aware that notes were being made of any important features to inform this work. It was ensured participants were aware that the notes taken would be accessible to them throughout the session and if any personal notes were made, they would be anonymised. However, if they wished for the note to be removed for any reason, this could be done. Ethical procedures as noted in Appendix 2 were adhered to in data collection following the British Educational Research Association (2018), GDPR guidelines and UWTSD guidelines for ethical educational research.

3.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were handed out to the staff at P Primary school. The questionnaire was the central source of information from adults to receive their thoughts and ideas on the cross-curricular approach of music and the outdoor environment based on their expertise as experienced practitioners. Bailey (2014) informed the combination of both open and closed questions within the questionnaire to gain a range of qualitative information.

Open questions were used to allow the participants the opportunity to give a free answer giving their own reflection and thoughts without a pre-prepared set of answers guiding their thoughts (Oppenheim, 2009). Closed questions were then used to receive information that was more factual and did not require the participants own experiences to answer the questions (Oppenheim, 2009 and Bailey, 2014). Whilst the closed questions are therefore easier to analyse as the answers are restricted, the

open questions provide more in-depth and realistic information which is harder to analyse between responses (Block et al. 1986).

3.4 Interviews

Interviews were carried out with members of staff and several pupils. Whilst there were only a limited number of staff members interviewed, they were reliable and fundamental sources for information as the interviewees were previous and current music coordinators. However, there was no coordinator for the outdoor provisions which meant there was no way of receiving any similar reliable and fundamental information regarding the school's use of the outdoors. This was however achieved through the questionnaires, general conversation with practitioners and pupil interviews. The interviews were carried out in an informal manner. This allowed the interviewees to provide an 'open range of response possibilities' as they were not pressured or made to feel uncomfortable in any way which encouraged the interviewees to speak truthfully and in greater depth than if in a formal setting which could have felt interrogative (Kvale, 2007, p.89).

3.5 Observations

Active observations were carried out throughout the primary school whilst engaging with children and looking at how the different year groups receive music lessons and use their outdoor environment. Active observations allow the observer to witness "what is going on at surface level, but also to be aware of the thinking activities hidden from view" (Stengelhofen, 1996, p.92). Thus, allowing a deeper understanding of not only what the children are doing through watching them, but to understand their thinking and the processes they are taking to develop their own work. Active observations have been found to remove the barrier between children and the observer rather than a passive observation which can lead learners to "heightened anxiety or total 'shut down'" (Morris, 2007, p.1). Observations took place in the whole class, however as a result of the active observation, this allowed for more focussed observation of smaller groups allowing time to analyse behaviour and children's engagement (Arthur et al. 2012).

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the results gathered from the different methods previously mentioned. The chapter concludes with an informed judgment from a triangulation of observations, questionnaire and interview feedback and existing research of whether there is potential for the place of music in the outdoor environment.

4.1 Analysis of secondary research in comparison to primary research

Children's creative development requires a stimulating environment that uses "new ways of doing things" to encourage pupil engagement (Robinson, 2009, p.24 and Suttie, 2018). This research project was arranged following Robinson's idea for using innovative ideas to boost, develop and enhance creativity amongst children. Thus, the outcome of combining two engaging aspects of primary education being music and the outdoor environment has been explored. In agreement with Robinson (2009), in an interview with one teacher (Appendix 4), it was stated that they had "never thought to deliver an actual music lesson outside". However, when asked about the creative development potential for children, they recognised that the outdoor environment gives children multiple opportunities to explore an endless range of sounds. Additionally, the outside environment gives children access to different resources which are not normally accessible to them inside. These resources, therefore, allow children to "explore the different sounds" that can be created by using different materials (Appendix 4). Evidence of the exploration of different sounds was seen during a lesson in the woodland. One child picked up a large stick and started striking it against different materials and was exploring how she was making different sounds with the same stick against different materials as shown in appendix 5. One response from the questionnaires sent out found that another teacher especially agreed with Robinson (2009) stating that the "outdoors tends to capture [children's] imagination and creativity" (Appendix 6) Furthermore, the Foundation Phase Framework (DfES, 2015, p.3) supports the importance of children's creative development using "first-hand experiential activities" and exploring outdoor environments through their own intuition to consolidate their understanding independently.

Beauchamp and Adams (2017) suggest that music allows children to enter Csikszentmihalyi's state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi's state of 'flow' is when a child is fully immersed in the activity they are undertaking and having full enjoyment in their engagement. Custodero and Stamou (2006) found that the making of music allows children to access multiple ways of creative development through being in the 'flow'. This can be enhanced even further using the outdoor environment. As Custodero (2011) suggests being outside adds a state of happiness and freedom removing restraints from the children's creativity and learning. This was evident during two lessons observed in year three classrooms. Pupils were previously introduced to a song which they had to adapt the words to in order to relate to their topic of the Roman invasion. In the observed lessons, pupils were asked to finish and refine their words and then add sounds to their piece in readiness for performing. However, this same lesson was observed both indoors and outdoors. During both lessons, pupils were asked to use any resources to add percussion to their piece. The class indoors were found to be less creative and stuck with limited body percussion such as clapping, whereas the outdoor group were more creative and used a wide range of materials such as rubber bricks, sticks, shells, pots and pans, plastic crates and rocks. The comparison between these is evident in Appendix 7.

Learning music in the outdoor environment is often an unfamiliar approach which children are not used to. Therefore, different behaviour management strategies may be required to keep children focussed (Evergreen, n.d. and Staempfli, 2009). During the observations of the music lessons in year three, it was evident that more sophisticated behaviour management strategies were required during the outside session to keep children on task. During the lesson inside, the behaviour of pupils was said by the class teacher to have been as normal with minimal strategies needing to be implemented. However, during the outside lesson, children were observed to become off task quickly and began experimenting how loudly they could 'play' the resources rather than carrying out the task in hand. Thus, requiring reminding to remain focused and stay on task. After the class had been reprimanded by the class teacher and began getting used to being outside and using the resources, the children remained focused on the task in hand. This could suggest that the unfamiliarity of this lesson meant that the learners wanted to explore the use of music in the outdoors and

were being creative and 'free' in their learning. This is supported in a summary of the lesson as shown in Appendix 8 which suggests that this behaviour was encouraged by the learners' excitement as they were given a task and resources which they have not had much experience with, and within an environment which they do not use very often. Thus, causing the children to become over-excited resulting in the behaviour. Kelly and Algermissen (2019) support this idea that when given an unusual task in an unused environment for learning, children can easily become over-excited; thus, leading to "negative behaviour if taken to extremes".

Additionally, the behaviour was mentioned by the class teaching assistant who, on re-entering the classroom after the session, said how the experience was very unusual for the children, which, is why "their behaviour was not as normal". Although, it was believed by members of staff that if the children were given such opportunities on a regular basis, using similar resources and being outside, there would be a great improvement in behaviour and their work. Robinson (2015) further supports this in that creativity involves "refining, testing, and focusing what [the children] are doing". If the children did not have this opportunity at the start of the lesson to refine and test the different resources, they would not have been able to further their creativity and would have struggled to complete the set task as they would not have had the experience to combine the use of the resources with the task.

Numerous children stated in the group interviews that they have received limited lessons on composing their own music. However, they did use applications on iPads such as Garage Band to compose a piece of music. Technology is becoming increasingly relied upon to deliver music lessons as it allows children to explore different instruments and create their own compositions, but it does not allow children to discover the sounds for themselves (Charles et al. 2008 and Dowdell et al. 2011). Appendix 9 supports this with children stating that they "had to use garage band on the iPads" to compose. They were not given the opportunity to see the instruments being played and to hear the instruments for themselves to get a feeling for them before being expected to compose their own short piece of music. It is evident that children believed they would have been able to develop their compositions further if they knew more about the instruments. This is due to the use of physical resources allowing for a deeper understanding, in this case of the instruments, making the learning most effective (Gueudet and Poisard, 2018). Appendix 13 further supports

this with 100% of respondents believing that an interactive lesson is important to engage children in their learning and to help give a greater understanding of what it is they are doing.

It is evident from the primary research undertaken that the use of the outdoor environment is believed to be effective by most respondents to the questionnaire. This can be seen in Appendix 11 with 66.6% of respondents stating that they found it effective. However, there are a few practitioners who do not believe the use of the outdoor environment to be effective during music lessons. Perhaps this is due to the teachers being unaware of the benefits of using the outdoor environment as they are not able to receive professional development and develop their knowledge. The DfE (2016, p.3) states that “effective professional development for teachers is a core part of securing effective teaching”. Furthermore, Donaldson (2015, p.77) supports the importance of continuing professional development to deliver “more complex knowledge and skills” However, Lashwood (2018) and Coughlan (2017) find that teachers are not receiving essential training that they require to enhance their teaching pedagogy as schools are having their budgets cut. Thus, teachers are unable to enhance their knowledge of music pedagogy to deliver effective and engaging lessons to develop pupils to become “creative contributors” in line with Donaldson (2015, p.29) Successful Futures aims.

Analysis of question four (Appendix 12) resulted in an unexpected finding. It was thought that music would not have been regarded as an important area of learning by all teachers. This is because of an earlier finding during an interview with the music coordinator where it was stated that music, including school P, is, unfortunately, the first curriculum that “teachers forget about due to the pressured of more important curriculums” making it the first area that does not get delivered (Appendix 10). Therefore, it was thought that music would not have been viewed as important. However, whilst all the respondents marked that they believe music to be an important aspect in their pupils’ learning, research has shown that there is a lack in the delivery of music education in the primary school. The APGME (2019 p.10) states of the aspiration for children to receive regular music lessons as part of the school curriculum. However, due to a lack of funding in addition to the “pressure” on schools from “the curriculum, evidence shows that the reality is somewhat different” as limited primary schools are delivering regular music education.

Retrospectively, it was thought that the response on the use of the outdoor environment would be positive from all questionnaires. However, as shown in Appendix 12, only six of the nine respondents believed the outdoor environment to be important to the learning. Therefore, not all the teachers asked believed outdoors to be valuable to learning. Perhaps the two could be combined to make efficient use of time covering the music curriculum by also using the outdoor environment. This does not merely suggest that instruments such as xylophones or drums need to be taken outside, although this could be done in fine weather, but, music in the outdoor environment aims to give children access to sensory experiences they would not otherwise receive. The aim of this is to then develop “collaborative thinking and working in a new dimension, away from the constraints of classroom walls” (Miller and Robertson, 2014, p.3) allowing pupils to take control of their own learning (Donaldson, 2015).

It has been found by MacDonald (2013) and Weeks and Nilsson (2010) that music interventions can be implemented to embrace the wellbeing of children. However, Kain et al (2004) suggest that for intervention to be most beneficial to the wellbeing of children, it requires interaction that encourages children’s creative thinking. It is not only during interventions that children should be actively involved in their learning. Donaldson (2015, p.117) agrees that children want engaging lessons “with more practical, interactivity and out-of-classroom activities”. These aspects of lessons are thought to have been lost in the current curriculum due to a “race for qualifications” (Donaldson, 2015, p.117). A change of environment stimulates children and their creative capabilities which, enforces the importance of outdoor learning to support children’s development in music through providing extensive opportunities and freedom for extended creativity and expression (Brown, 2010 and Lyons, 1990). Primary research has supported this with 100% of respondents agreeing with the importance of interactive lessons to engage children in their learning (Appendix 13). Likewise, it was evident during the observation of a music lesson in a year three class that an interactive element encourages children’s engagement in their learning. In the lesson, children were shown several physical instruments and were invited to hold these instruments. It was evident from this that children were engaged and eager to hold the instruments to understand what the instrument was like. They were also invited to try playing the instruments allowing them a true experience and

understanding of them (Appendix 14). Following this, children listened to a number of pieces of music where they were to identify the key instruments where it was evident that all children were engaged and eager to identify the instruments they had tried for themselves being played.

During an interview with the music coordinator, when asked about composing in the outdoor environment she seemed reluctant to promote this. The music coordinator voiced her opinion of how she would prefer to remain in the “contained and quiet classroom environment” as this makes it “easier for children to work and record their compositions” (Appendix 10). Applefield et al (2014) supports the idea that the classroom environment displays the importance of lessons and learning to children. Thus, ensuring children are aware of the importance of what they are learning. However, when they are not sat at their desks, they are more likely to lose awareness of the importance of what they are learning. Although, it was said that the initial stages of composing could possibly be done outside, for example, with children doing a listening walk outside and recreating the sounds they hear outside when they get back to the classroom.

However, it is important to ensure that the outdoor environment is only used in lessons in which it will give opportunities for children to further enhance their learning which they would not otherwise have received. This is supported by a class teacher in their questionnaire response. The response suggests that if a lesson is including the outdoor environment just to “do outdoors”, then there is no real intention for the children’s learning being enhanced by the outdoors in the lesson. There should “always be a purpose to their outdoor learning” (Appendix 15). This is further supported by Soh and Meerah (2013) who promote the cruciality of the outdoor environment only being used when it allows children to achieve further than they would without the outdoor provisions.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings of the research project and the ideas discussed throughout.

5.1 – Summary of aims

Aim 1 – A thorough understanding of the current position of music in the primary school has been identified. Whilst it is considered an important area of learning, it is often left behind due to pressures from other curriculum areas. This was evident from primary research during an interview with the music coordinator of P Primary. This is supported by The Guardian news (Unknown, 2018) by a teacher who states that “teachers are under pressure to improve outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics”. However, it is evident that the outdoor environment is considered as an important aspect to be included in the learning of children in the primary school.

Aim 2 – Whilst limited, the music lessons observed both inside and outside were beneficial and crucial to this research project. The observations found that whilst the music lessons outside did require greater behaviour management strategies for a short period of time, the outdoor environment greatly enhanced the creativity and imagination of the pupil’s musical development. However, it is important that these behaviour management strategies do not refrain children from undertaking the necessary actions of “refining and testing” resources available to them as this may hinder children’s creativity if they are not given the opportunity explore, engage and understand the resources they have available (Robinson, 2015).

Aim 3 – The use of the outdoor environment can be effective to children’s learning where the opportunity allows for greater enhancement of the lesson. The outdoor environment provides children with the freedom to develop their creativity and expressions in the state of ‘flow’ (Custodero and Stamou, 2006) whilst they are fully immersed in an activity displaying full enjoyment in their engagement. A valuable outdoor environment that is used to its full potential to give children extended opportunities can help to enhance the music curriculum (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998 and Rivkin, 2000).

5.2 – Conclusion of findings

This research project includes a diverse range of literature which provides a critical analysis of music and the outdoor environment separately in the primary school. However, there is limited research which has been carried out focussing on the use of the outdoor environment to deliver music lessons. However, conclusions of each have been combined along with undertaken primary research to inform this project.

It is evident that whilst there is a range of current research into the benefits of the outdoors to children's learning, contrasting research shows that teachers avoid the use of the outdoor environment. It is vital that teachers are made aware of the many benefits the outdoor environment can have on both children's academic ability and their wellbeing. Additionally, this research project has found there is a certain stigma that some teachers are unable to teach a successful music lesson as they do not have the musical skills they believe they require (Glover and Young, 1998 and Adams and Beauchamp, 2018). This misconception requires intervening to give teachers the support and confidence they require in order to be confident enough to deliver effective and stimulating music lessons.

Through observations, it has been evident that children require familiarity with their engagement of the outdoor environment to enhance their learning opportunities and not be removed from their task. This is thought to be true for all areas of the curriculum and not just music. With the implementation of the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015), and in line with the handbook for outdoor learning (DCELLS, 2009), it is believed this issue of unfamiliarity will be removed as children will receive a variety of lessons using the resources that are not available to them inside.

5.3 – Future research

It would be greatly beneficial to carry out further research in a range of both primary and secondary schools to see how music can be delivered using the outdoor environment more efficiently. It is thought that with more experience, issues such as behaviour management would be removed as the children would be used to such lessons. Furthermore, future research could set out to find how the outdoor environment could enhance the musical capabilities of children through their

engagement with natural resources to create sounds as well as the creativity of children.

5.4 – Professional learning

From the findings of this research project, it is evident that there is certainly a place for music in the outdoor environment as it can allow the creativity, engagement and imagination of children to develop greatly. However, it seems important to ensure that the use of the outdoors is not merely to be outside, but to allow children the opportunity to develop these skills and allow them the freedom to explore. Additionally, the benefits of the outdoor environment have proven to be of great importance to children in the primary school. Thus, concluding that it will be a good aspect to integrate into future practice in the classroom.

Appendices

See supporting document.

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