

Case Study

Name: Pupil C

Subject: Communication Development Through Music

Date: Spring 2016



Pupil C is a non-verbal pupil with profound communication difficulties; he has limited ways of expressing himself and can often become frustrated. This frustration can often lead to behaviours which become barriers to his learning and the learning of others around him. Listening to recorded music has often been used as a strategy for calming Pupil C when he is becoming frustrated. The importance of the systematic use of music as a way of accessing communication opportunities for Pupil C was clear. It was decided that Pupil C would have a weekly 1:1, 20 minute music intervention during a time of the day he often found most difficult - first thing on a Monday morning.



Pupil C will often arrive at his music sessions, upset and showing signs of frustration. Initially it would take some time for Pupil C to calm once the session had started, but always and without fail the sessions would result in a complete change of mood. As time has gone on and Pupil C has become familiar with his Monday morning routine, as soon as he hears the sound of his welcome song when he walks in the room, he calms and walks over to independently sit down, ready to participate. The impact of these early morning music sessions last long into the day and his class team report seeing the benefits having a clear impact on Pupil C's engagement with other activities carried out throughout the day.

The format of the music sessions has stayed consistent since September. This consistency has allowed Pupil C to develop his spontaneous communication during the sessions. Familiar instruments are used and familiar songs are played. This affords Pupil C the confidence to reach out to interact with an instrument, hold sustained eye contact during a familiar song and request more of an activity through touching hands. Pupil C is also becoming much more aware of his voice and beginning to express himself through musical vocalisations. A microphone with vocal effects is used to accentuate Pupils C's vocalisations and to ensure that a stronger cause and effect link can be formed.



Pupil C exploring the strings of the acoustic guitar and the transfer of this skill to an electric guitar with effects on the output.



Pupil C reaching out and touching a hand offered to start the music playing again.

Sounds of Intent (SoI) and the Engagement Profile are being used to track the progress which Pupil C has made during the sessions. The SoI framework is also being used to inform future progression by assessing the level Pupil C is working towards and orchestrating situations to work on this specific skill area. Feedback from the class team has always been positive and they regularly request that Pupil C gets more access to music sessions. The feedback on progress made during music sessions has allowed his class teacher to evidence progress in other areas of the curriculum also.

By being able to work so closely with Pupil C it has been possible to evidence a wide range of progress in each of the areas of the framework. Through allowing Pupil C to take the lead on pacing and which sounds are explored during his sessions, he has evidenced progress which is having an impact on every aspect of his Riverside journey.

Gareth Smith – Class Teacher and Music Co-ordinator