



Music First



@ Highbury Grove

www.musicfirst.org.uk



ISLINGTON

Supported by the Dame Alice Owen's Foundation and private sponsors.



Cambridge Education
@Islington



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*m*usic *f*irst is a new and exciting project inspired by the internationally famous El Sistema music and social transformation programme which began thirty years ago in Venezuela. Over 300,000 Venezuelan children now participate in this programme playing a full range of instruments in numerous child and youth orchestras.

Building on these principles and with El Sistema's full support and encouragement we started the Music First project in the London Borough of Islington in 2008.

More recently, our February 2010 concert brought together over 100 young people involved in a music academy at Highbury Grove Secondary School and almost 200 children from three primary schools, within the same community. They were joined by 30 students from Dame Alice Owen's School. This concert featured all of the youngest musicians from the Barbican launch together with another 100 children who started to learn their instrument in September 2009. For the newest group this was their very first public performance as part of the Music First Orchestra.

Our vision is to transform young people's lives through music and enhance this groups academic achievement. By playing together in orchestras, they work to the expectations of a large team and every success raises their confidence and self esteem. Each year, as these young people mature as musicians they will be joined by younger players and they will have a role in helping to nurture the talents of new members.

Music First was launched at the Barbican in May 2009 at a gala concert which was generously funded by the Dame Alice Owen Foundation, The Worshipful Company of Brewers, Highbury Grove School and Cambridge Education @ Islington.



We have established a rigorous process for monitoring the musical progress of our members but we are also committed to raising their academic achievement. We shall monitor their achievement in mathematics and compare this with a parallel test group who are not participating in Music First. For primary aged pupils we shall also look at their speaking and listening teacher assessments which is a statutory part of their English curriculum. Both primary and secondary SATs or equivalent results will be compared across the two groups and National Curriculum levels of achievement in mathematics will be compared on a termly basis. Should SATs revert to continuous teacher assessment, we will be working in close liaison with class teachers and form tutors to update our data.

Beyond this, we seek to include their families in a range of Music First events, as new audiences and where possible, as committed volunteers. By providing opportunities for them to work together around the Music First hub, we expect to have a really positive impact on their community.

Through Music First, we intend to expand the provision of life-changing skills and experiences for the young people and their families. In order for this to happen, we are seeking to raise funds. To date, we have depended on the very generous contributions, both financial and in-kind, from our initiating partners, including each of those mentioned above. In addition we have had tremendous support from our colleagues at Gillespie, Highbury Quadrant and Laycock Primary Schools.

This year, Islington Council has become a key Music First partner and provided a significant grant, together with funding from the Dame Alice Owen Foundation, which will allow us to establish individual and small group teaching along with whole group sessions as an additional activity on Thursday evenings.

We have also received contributions from private donors who gave generously leading up to and following the Barbican concert. This has allowed us to provide even more tutor time, resources and instruments.

We need now to plan the next phase and roll the programme out into other Islington schools.

For this extension we need further funding to ensure the benefits reach all primary and secondary schools in Islington. Once the programme is firmly embedded in this Borough, our ambition is to move the concept across London.

We therefore rely on donations from philanthropists, charitable trusts, companies and other sponsors. If you wish to make a donation, provide sponsorship or any form of in-kind support please contact us using one of the email addresses below.

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Transforming young lives and communities through music.

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