

BABY S&S strings

STANDARDS & QUALITY REPORT

2023-24

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BABY Strings

2,047 PRIMARY CHILDREN RECEIVED WEEKLY
WHOLE-CLASS STRING TUITION

12 SCHOOLS FROM ACROSS GLASGOW SIGNED
UP FOR PROJECT

12 TUTORS DELIVERING PROJECT

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A transformative and innovative project which began in 2017 across 4 Primary schools in the Eastbank learning community of Glasgow City Council, Baby Strings has now expanded to **12 Primary schools** across the city, employing **12 tutors** to deliver weekly, whole class string lessons to **2,047 primary school children**.

BABY S&trings

Schools Involved

Eastbank Primary School, Quarry Brae Primary School, Thorntree Primary School, Wellshot Primary School, St Brigid's Primary School, Blackfriars Primary School, St Bartholomew's Primary School, St Benedict's Primary School, St Saviours Primary School, Riverside Primary School, St Roch's Primary School, St Clare's Primary School; with 2 new potential schools joining the project in 24/25.

About the Project

In these schools, the Baby Strings has become an integral part of the school curriculum and has successfully introduced young pupils to stringed instruments. The program has not only provided a solid foundation in the skills required to play a stringed instrument but has also encouraged a sense of teamwork and discipline among the young learners. One classroom teacher commented; *"Some children who find it hard to engage in the classroom are very enthusiastic in Baby Strings which is great to see."*

Parents and classroom teachers, who participated in our survey, highlighted several key advantages for Baby Strings learners.

These included:

- **An enhanced musical appreciation & skill**
- **Improved teamwork & collaboration**
- **Increased student engagement and enthusiasm**
- **Strengthened sense of community in the school.**

These advantages show the positive impact of the Baby Strings project on students' overall development.

Baby Strings envisions a seamless and continuous musical journey for pupils, starting from early years into upper primary, then into secondary education and beyond. This transformative project aims to enhance academic achievement, narrow equity gaps, and unite the learning community through an exciting musical experience and the shared language of music for children and families.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
PERFORMANCE
LISTENING
SELF CONFIDENCE
SOCIAL SKILLS
SENSE OF BELONGING
TEAM WORK
SELF DISCIPLINE
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
CO-OPERATION
RESPONSIBILITY
COMMITMENT
MUTUAL SUPPORT
BONDING TO MEET
GROUP GOALS
INCREASED CONCENTRATION
FINE MOTOR SKILLS
RELAXATION
ENJOYMENT
TRANSITIONS
WIDER OPPORTUNITIES
SHARED LANGUAGE
RESPECT





"Baby strings gives every child a unique opportunity not experienced in many other schools, to learn an instrument and be part of a community of learners. Every child is treated with respect, attention, praise and appreciation. Not all pupils will choose to continue learning their instrument beyond P6 but may return to it in later years. All children are included regardless of ability and many pupils thrive in baby strings where they might not in more academic subjects. The opportunity to express themselves is priceless. It is wonderful to see the children in the school orchestra developing their interest more and performing together. This has built up their self-esteem and appreciation for music and each other. Our tutors are fabulous!" - Classroom Teacher

BAZY STRINGS PROGRAMME

The Baby Strings programme features weekly lessons led by two CREATE Instrumental Music Instructors, collaborating with the classroom teacher. One instructor typically leads the session, while the other provides support, addressing posture and technique interchangeably. Involving the classroom teacher in each session is crucial to the success of the programme, whether through encouraging them to play an instrument, assisting with posture, or engaging with musical notes on the board. Classroom teachers are expected to reinforce the music learning each week by repeating musical games, singing, and facilitating instrument-related activities in order to promote a seamless integration of music education into the overall curriculum

Initially P1 children prepare for instrumental lessons through Kodály based lessons using voice, beat, rhythm, pitch and movement. Violins, Violas and Cellos are introduced in P2. Performances, which are seen as a vital part of the programme, are introduced from the start.

One of our Baby Strings tutors said :

"Baby Strings is a remarkable programme that affords children the opportunity to flourish in a compassionate and nurturing setting, enabling them to cultivate a unique skill set that might otherwise be inaccessible to them. Baby Strings not only proves immensely advantageous to the children, but it also offers a profoundly fulfilling vocation for the teachers involved."

A classroom teacher noted from our survey that *"Baby Strings is a fantastic initiative. Our pupils love building on the skills they have learned each week and are excited to share their learning with families at home. Some have also shown an interest in further exploring musical styles and other instruments. As a class teacher it has been wonderful to watch pupils flourish and really come alive in this area of the curriculum through the Baby Strings programme. It has exposed learners to new musical genres and opportunities to explore string instruments that they otherwise may not have had outside of school. Learners are always excited and fully engaged in the activity and are keen to transfer the skills they have learned in their classroom."*

"The introduction of Baby Strings has been a very important addition to our school community. The benefits are tremendous and has provided children and staff with so many new skills and confidence."

- Head Teacher

BABY STRINGS



"I think baby strings has been really beneficial for the students I have worked with, and it has been very rewarding to see their progress in music and also general academic and social skills over the last three years"

- Tutor

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The Baby Strings project places a strong emphasis on family engagement, encouraging families to actively participate in their child's musical journey. Parents and carers engage in hands-on activities such as making cardboard instruments with their children, attend 'meet the teacher' sessions lead by the instrumental instructors and participate in 'show and tell' events where the children showcase their developing musical skills and proudly display the specific instruments they are learning. Attendance at performances is also encouraged, providing families with first hand understanding of the project and developing a shared musical experience. 100% of parents who took part in our Baby Strings survey agreed that – Baby Strings is an inclusive project and helps to improve confidence within young learners. One parent shared *"I love to see my child learn musical instruments and learn new skills what she would enjoy."* Another commented *"It's an incredible opportunity and we are grateful for that"*. While another simply called it *"A great initiative"*.



CPD

Classroom teachers are involved in CPD (Continuing Professional Development) training throughout the course of the year which then enables them to deliver part of the Baby Strings lessons, from shared weekly lesson plans, without the specialist instructor being present.

"I love to see my child learn musical instruments and learn new skills"
- Parent

PLAY DAYS & PERFORMANCES

In 2023, children and young people were provided an opportunity to engage in Play Days and Masterclasses at City Halls, the CREATE Centre of Excellence for Music Performance. These events aimed to raise group performance skills and act as a stepping stone for those nearing enrolment in CREATE Music City Groups.

In May 2023, 402 Primary 4 pupils from 10 Baby Strings schools across Glasgow participated in the Play Days. The Baby Strings pupils from the upper stage (P5-P7) engaged in collaborative sessions with peers from schools across the city, totalling 78 participants.



10 students from each Baby Strings school came together to showcase their talent at the Spring CREATE concert in 2023, with 100 Baby Strings performers, promoting a rich collaborative musical experience among the young artists.

Each school independently organises Christmas performances and various concerts throughout the year. Additionally, some schools collaborate within their

community to host joint concerts, giving a sense of unity and providing support for students during transitions to Secondary Schools.

In May 2024, we launched our new play days. With 720 children from 12 schools participating in the project, we made the decision to conduct workshops

**720
CHILDREN FROM
12 BABY STRINGS
SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATED IN
PLAY DAYS**



directly within the schools, to save on travel costs and be fully inclusive. These workshops featured engaging activities and performances by IMS string quartets and ensembles. Our primary goal was to enhance the students' educational journey and cultivate a profound appreciation for music.

Some pupil feedback from the play days 2024

"Great choice of songs and music", "Spectacular songs", "I like the bit when we stand in 'Levitating' because we all dance and at the end we stamp, and I loved your music you did"

Baby Strings Extravaganza Concert - June 2024

This concert showcased the talents of 457 pupils from our 12 Baby Strings Schools. They performed at City Halls in front of teachers, families and peers. This was an amazing occasion celebrating their dedication and musical achievements from this year.

TRACKING / REPORTING & EVALUATING

The schools involved in CREATE Baby Strings initiatives have clear procedures in place to evaluate the impact of the programme on wider attainment, achievement and wellbeing. In a recent survey, 79% of classroom teachers involved in the Baby String project had observed positive effects on learning and engagement in other areas of the curriculum, such as; Numeracy & Mathematics, Literacy & English, Health & Wellbeing, Social Studies, Technologies, Sciences, Modern Languages & Expressive Arts.

Evaluation has also shown that parents and carers are supportive of the project and value the impact it is having on their children. One parent stated "It's amazing you do provide this for children. Our son enjoys it very much and I believe that other children love it as well. Thank you for your patience and hard work. You do fantastic job!" and another quote "I think the Baby Strings project is a fantastic opportunity that allows my children to experience playing an

instrument. Due to time restraints and frankly limited available opportunities, I would not be able to provide such an experience outside school. As such, this gives them a chance to learn musicality."

A Head Teacher commented

"Baby Strings has had a significant impact on our school. Children from our area have very few opportunities to be involved in projects like this and it is quite literally changing lives through these opportunities."



"...changing lives through these opportunities"
- Head Teacher

CREATE CITY MUSIC GROUPS

To accommodate the project's growth, Glasgow CREATE has formed a new orchestra named "Intermezzo Strings". This orchestra is for pupils who are in the early stages of development and not quite ready to sightread musical notation but are ready to expand their skills! Usually, the children who are in P5 from the Baby Strings project go to this orchestra. Once the children have developed their musical skills within the Intermezzo Strings group, they then progress to join the other orchestras: String Orchestra, String Sinfonia, String Ensemble and Glasgow Schools Symphony Orchestra. This progression ensures a continuous and seamless advancement in their musical education.



PUPIL EQUITY FUND / PROJECT FUNDING

The project was initially supported through PEF (Pupil Equity Fund) and has been bolstered by additional funding made available from Scottish Government to Instrumental Music Services plus core Instrumental Music Instruction. Furthermore, other schools have secured extra funding from various sources, including The Frost Trust, The William Syson Foundation, and The Glasgow Barons.



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