



*...bring the day alive!*

## Information Pack

First Thing Music is part of the 'Learning about Culture' programme, being funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and the Royal Society of Arts

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**First Thing Music** is a project created to deliver a structured music education programme based on the Kodály approach to 1,800 five-to-six year olds in 60 schools. The project team is led by Lindsay Ibbotson, (see 'Partners'), in an innovative partnership with Tees Valley Music Service and members of the British Kodály Academy.

In this trial, students will learn the basics of music through daily singing and musical games, while their teachers receive training led by members of the British Kodály Academy. It will explore whether this whole-class approach can help not only to develop pupils' music skills, but also literacy, and social and emotional skills.

## Background

There has been an increasing interest in the potential benefits of music on pupil achievement at school. In the UK, there have already been movements to encourage music education in schools. However, there have persistent barriers to access, including ambivalence about the value of music education, financial constraints, a lack of confidence in music skills amongst some primary school teachers, and competing demands for curriculum time.

## Why Kodály?

The Kodály approach to music education is child centred, playful and physical, based on a carefully worked out sequential curriculum in which songs and musical games are used to teach the basics of music. It uses such techniques as signs, games, clapping, reading musical symbols and rhythmic notation, and most centrally, singing. Because of the many-faceted perceptual and cognitive training offered in the system, it has long been suspected both by those teaching and those observing this method that it has implications for children's learning abilities in not only musical areas, but non-musical ones as well.

## Project Evaluation

The project is being funded by the EEF in order to evaluate the effect of *First Thing Music* on reading and social skill of Year One pupils. The evaluation itself will be conducted by the Behavioural Insights Team, at the Institute of Education, UCL. The ***First Thing Music*** programme will run over the course of the school year, and its impact over three terms will be evaluated using a randomised controlled trial (RCT), randomly assigning classes within schools either to a 'treatment' group who will participate in the ***First Thing Music*** programme, or to a 'control' group who will not participate, but continue with their normal activities.

The results of this project will make an important contribution to understanding the value of music in improving pupil attainment.



## The Partners in the **First Thing Music** Team

**Lindsay Ibbotson**, who went to school in Redcar, is a freelance music teacher, Early Years specialist, amateur, and researcher, with a background in creative music projects, teaching and directing, both in formal and non-formal sectors. Although she already had a First Class degree in Music and Performance Arts, she was struck by the simplicity and power of Kodaly methodology whilst attending a course designed for the primary school classroom, (Judith Brindle, 2007). Since then, all her teaching has been inspired by Kodály-based pedagogy. She has seen the benefits of working with musical activities in this way, throughout West and North Yorkshire schools, community choirs, and now, through two years of action research in Teesside, in Early Years settings. She runs Marske Music, is a member of the Music Education Council's working groups for Early Years, Singing, and Research, and sits on the Early Years Steering Group for NYMAZ, (North Yorkshire Music Action Zone).

**Tees Valley Music Service** is delighted to be a key partner in the 'First Thing Music' project and looks forward to supporting the work with schools, teachers and children to really investigate the impact of music education upon the development of our young people. TVMS is the lead partner in the Music Education Hub which serves the four local authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland. We work with local, regional and national partners to ensure that all children in the Tees Valley have equal access to a rich variety of musical activities. It is our mission to create, develop and sustain opportunities for children and young people to discover and develop their musical potential, and to make a difference to their everyday lives and the communities in which they live.

**Susan Robertson**, the Service Manager of TVMS will facilitate the contact between the project and schools throughout the region, and will monitor the progress and effect of this particular approach to music in the classroom.

**Lucinda Geoghegan** (B.Mus) is the Education Director for the National Youth Choir of Scotland, a lecturer in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and a tutor for the British Kodály Academy. She delivers workshops in Kodály methodology worldwide from Britain, Europe, Far East to Australia and is a regular guest lecturer at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary, teaching on the Summer and year long programmes. Publications include the popular Singing Games and Rhymes series ***Singing Games and Rhymes for Tiny Tots, Singing Games and Rhymes for Early Years, Singing Games and Rhymes for Middle Years.***

**Zoe Greenhalgh** (FHEA; MA (Early Years Music) is well known for her work as an Early Childhood Music Specialist, educator and researcher. She has provided many bespoke workshops for Early Years and Music practitioners and written accredited programmes and modules for the British Kodály Academy and Edge Hill University where she is an *Associate Tutor in Early Years Education*. *Zoe is a course mentor for the recently validated, ground breaking Certificate for Music Educators: Early Childhood at the Centre for Research in Early Childhood in Birmingham.*



The RSA/EEF 'Learning About Culture' Trial

**Expression of Interest**

Please return either an electronic or scanned copy via email to Susan Robertson at the address below :

[susanftm@tvms.org.uk](mailto:susanftm@tvms.org.uk)

**Please note:**

Completing this form does not guarantee your participation in the trial. This form registers your school's interest and willingness to be considered for the trial. Further steps will be required in order to confirm your eligibility. Among those whose eligibility is confirmed, a randomisation process will take place in the Spring of 2018 to determine which classes within selected schools will have immediate access to the intervention, and which classes will make up the control group.

**Both groups are critical to the success of the trial.**

The delivery of the activity in schools will begin in September 2018. Under the terms outlined by the EEF, a charge of £200 is required to secure your participation.

School	Address	Postcode	No of Pupils in yr1 2018/19 cohort

I wish to register our interest in being part of the RSA/EEF Learning about Culture Trial.

Please confirm the name of the lead teacher who will be the main contact for the programme and communications:

Head Teacher:.....

Email.....Phone number.....

Signed

Headteacher.....Date.....

Print Name:.....



## Links

### Education Endowment Foundation :

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/new/>

### Royal Society of Arts :

<https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/creative-learning-and-development-folder/learning-about-culture>

**Tees Valley Music Service** : With a team of experienced professional teachers, TVMS takes our young people from their very first steps in instrumental and vocal tuition from Foundation Stage through to sixth form. TVMS runs 42 weekly ensembles including our highly acclaimed Tees Valley Youth Orchestra and Tees Valley Youth Choir. We also have a well-established team of experienced curriculum specialists who deliver workshops, curriculum lessons, enrichment experiences and CPD for schools throughout the North East.

<http://www.tvms.org.uk/first-thing-music>

**British Kodály Academy** : <http://kodaly.org.uk/resource-articles/>

**Marske Music** : <https://marskemusic.co.uk/first-thing-music.html>

**Guardian Article** : <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/oct/03/school-results-music-bradford>

**How to improve the school results: not extra maths but music, loads of it**