

## POINTS FOR DEBATE

The editors would particularly welcome comments on or responses to articles which appear in the 'Points for Debate' section. These may be in the form of a short paper or letter and should be sent to Dr Stephanie Pitts, Department of Music, University of Sheffield, 38 Taptonville Road, Sheffield S10 5BR, s.e.pitts@sheffield.ac.uk. Selected contributions will be published at the earliest opportunity.

# To what extent does participation in extracurricular music affect the future aspirations of 11–12-year-olds? A small-scale investigation

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*I undertook this project as a 12-year-old student while studying research methods at the Children's Research Centre at the Open University. It has already been shown that doing music improves children's Mathematics and English scores. The aim of this study was to find out if it also raises the aspirations of the children taking part. A questionnaire was given out to 80 Year 7 children at two schools in Milton Keynes. Questions investigated the children's musical participation and future aspirations as well as their parents' attitudes and education.*

*The most important findings are that the musical participation of the children is positively correlated with their future aspirations. Musical participation is most closely linked with parental enthusiasm for it. Parental pressure and education were found to have no link with musical participation, but families with low incomes may find affording musical activities hard to maintain.*

*It is recommended that more money be put into music education so children of low socio-economic backgrounds can have more of a chance to play musical instruments.*

## Introduction

I am a 12-year-old student, and I undertook this project while studying research methods at the Children's Research Centre (CRC) at the Open University. Young people who attend the CRC get a chance to learn some research methods and then do a research project of their own choosing about something that matters to them. They formulate their own research question and design the way data will be collected. The children lead the research; the adults just help them. One likely advantage of school children doing research projects is that young people may be more open with people their own age than they would be with adults. Many young people may give the adults what they think the adults want to hear rather than what they really think (Alderson, 2000; Kellett *et al.*, 2004).

I do a lot of extracurricular activities like music, sport and dance. While I have been doing them I have noticed that the musicians often seem to be the bright ones at school who have high career ambitions such as doctors, professional musicians, lawyers and vets.

However, I have also noticed that a lot of children who start music drop out. There seems to be a variety of reasons for this, such as the cost, a lack of progress i.e. they do not do enough practice, not enough support from parents or too much support (pushy parents).

I decided I wanted to focus on the possible link between participation in extracurricular music and high future aspirations. I also wanted to see how parental attitudes and background affect this relationship.

There have been many claims that extracurricular activities in general, i.e. any organised sport or pastime run outside the compulsory school curriculum, are linked to many beneficial characteristics in school-age children, such as higher self-esteem. Furthermore the claims for the beneficial effects of participation in any musical activity on academic performance have been particularly enthusiastic, even though the research literature underpinning these claims is not conclusive. It has also been shown that the better the students' academic performance, the more prestigious the occupations to which they aspire (Rice, 2002). However, the situation is not a simple one; many other linked factors are found to influence future aspirations.

According to Rice (2002), the home environment has an important influence on adolescents' educational aspirations. Bandura *et al.* (2001) claim that parents who do not promote academic achievement have children who do not believe in doing well at school or going on to college, and who also set themselves occupational goals well below their ability.

Parents with higher educational qualifications have children who attend more extracurricular activities, including music, and also have higher expectations for their children (Peng & Wright, 1994). However, poorer families may not lack aspirations; they simply may not have the material or educational resources to achieve them. Children from low socio-economic backgrounds are sometimes required to find a job to help support their family. Therefore, they spend less time on homework and in other school-related activities, which leads on to lower occupational aspirations (D'Amico, 1984; Marsh, 1991; Singh, 1998).

However, sometimes parents expect too much of their children. Consequently, when the children do not achieve what the parents hoped, they will be lectured or criticised. The children start to feel that they will only get love if they do well. In the end the children often give up the activity completely.

My observations and reading have led me to think that I might expect to find the following: children who do lots of music tend to be more ambitious than children who do little or no music; musical participation is directly linked with parental enthusiasm for music; however, too much enthusiasm may be seen as parental pressure, which can have a detrimental effect on musical participation. It is possible that musical participation and high future aspirations are simply more common in the children of parents who were educated at university.

## **Methodology**

The study was carried out in two schools in the Milton Keynes area, one school (Willow Bank) is in an affluent area and the other school (Plough Lane) is in a less affluent area (these are not their real names). Uptake of free school meals at the two schools is < 1% at Willow Bank and 16% at Plough Lane.

I decided to use a questionnaire rather than interviews because I wanted to get responses from a large number of children, in a form that I could analyse statistically. Questions that were raised by this study could then be followed up in greater detail with in depth interviews.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed to try and get all the necessary information from the child respondents in a way that made them feel as if they were talking to a 'friend' of their own age. Therefore, I tried to make the questions as simple and straightforward as I could, with no difficult 'adult' language. For example, the sub-questions to question 9, 'How do your parents encourage you to practise for your musical activity(s)?' uses the type of words that children use when talking to each other. However, the word 'parents' was used throughout the questionnaire instead of 'mum and dad' for two reasons: firstly, I did not want to patronise the young respondents and, secondly, because many respondents would not be living with their real 'mum and dad'. I did realise that quite a high proportion of children would not be living with both parents and that some may be living with carers, but I did not feel the need for drawn-out 'politically correct' terminology. I was sure the children would understand what I meant and would not take offence.

In addition to using language that was simple and straightforward I used large and clear print to make the questionnaire easy to read and complete. At one stage my Children's Research Centre 'supporter' suggested that my questionnaire should be limited to no more than two sides of A4. I did not take this advice as the number of questions I needed to ask and the size of print I wanted to use meant that the questionnaire was three sides in length. Because of my experience of being a Year 7 pupil I also believed that my fellow pupils were perfectly capable of filling in a three-page questionnaire, especially when most questions only needed a tick in a box. In the event the results largely confirmed my view.

An anonymous questionnaire including some multiple choice and some single word answer questions was designed to investigate the following parameters:

- (1) Extracurricular musical participation by pupils (MP), which included any organised musical activity outside the national curriculum e.g. singing, playing an instrument, private music lessons or school clubs.
- (2) Their future aspirations (FA), in terms of going to university or college, what they would study and what kind of career they wanted.
- (3) How much pleasure the pupils perceive they get from their musical participation (ME).
- (4) How enthusiastic the pupils think their parents are that they do extracurricular music (PME).
- (5) The amount of parental pressure to do music the pupils feel they get (PP).
- (6) The pupils' understanding of their parents' educational background (PED).

My helpers at the CRC commented on the first questionnaire; after amendment, the second version was piloted with a group of children from my class, and then on the basis of their responses the design and questions were finalised.

Permission was obtained for children to fill in the anonymous questionnaire during school time. It was given out to 80 children aged 11–12 years in Year 7 in the two schools. The sample from Plough Lane was smaller (32) than Willow Bank (48), because Plough Lane School only had one Year 7 class whereas the latter had two.

Questionnaires were distributed to the schools in June 2004, and collected a week later. A covering letter was sent with the questionnaires from my helper and myself explaining my research and giving instructions to the teachers. The teachers distributed the questionnaires, watched while the children filled them in and then collected them in at the end. The children were asked not to discuss their answers with each other.

A quantitative scoring system was set to try to avoid subjectivity in the analysis of the responses. The same scoring method was used for every questionnaire, the same questionnaire was given to everyone, both groups of children filled them out in school time and all the children had as long as they needed to fill it in.

Several different ways were used to analyse the data.

- (1) A tally was used to compare the frequency of particular multiple-choice responses, e.g. when do you want to leave school, 16 or 18?
- (2) A numbered system was used to allocate a value to particular responses, e.g. If you want to go to a university/college, which university/college do you want to go to and what would you study? So if the children said 'Oxford/Cambridge and Lawyer' they would get a higher score than if they said 'Milton Keynes College and Hairdresser'.

Five different types of statistical tests were used to analyse the data.

A chi-squared test was used to compare the frequencies of the responses in different classes. The Mann–Whitney U test, and the Z-test were used to test for differences in responses between classes. The Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient and Linear Regression were used to look for proportional relationships between parameters.

To find out how much extracurricular music children did the following questions were asked:

- (1) How many instruments do you play?
- (2) Approximately what grade are you?
- (3) Do you take exams?
- (4) Do you belong to any musical groups and if so which ones?
- (5) Do you take part in musical performances or competitions?

Points were accumulated for each instrument played, each grade reached and each activity engaged in.

To find out how much the pupils enjoy music the following questions were asked:

- (1) How much do you like playing your musical instrument?
- (2) How much do you like exams, competitions and performances?

Each answer was given on a 5-point scale, ranging from 'like it a lot' through 'don't mind' to 'hate it' and points were allocated from +2 down to –2 respectively.

To find out how enthusiastic the parents were about the pupils doing music the following questions were asked:

- (1) How much do you think your parents like you playing an instrument(s)?
- (2) How much do you think your parents like you doing exams, competitions and performances?

Answers were given using the same 5-point scale and scored accordingly.

A different type of question was used to assess parental pressure. Pupils were asked to look at a list of possible parental tactics that may be used to get them to do their music, and to indicate which ones their parents used and how often they used them. The questions were:

- (1) How do your parents encourage you in your musical activity(s)? Here is the list of options that the children could choose from:
  - They don't do or say anything (scores 0)
  - They give me praise when I have tried hard (scores 1)
  - They praise me when I do well (scores 1)
  - They tell me they expect me to do my best (scores 2)
  - They reward me irrespective of how well I do (scores 2)
  - They give me rewards when I have done well (scores 3)
  - They tell me how I could have done better (scores 4)
  - They promise to give me rewards if I do well (scores 5)
  - They punish me/ tell me off if I do badly (scores 5)
- (2) How do your parents encourage you to practise for your musical activity(s)? Here are the responses the children could choose:
  - They leave me to get on with it if and when I want to (scores 0)
  - They just tell me to do it (scores 1)
  - They get cross if I don't practise (scores 2)
  - They make me feel guilty if I don't practise (scores 3)
  - They give me a reward if I practise (scores 4)
  - They stop me doing something I like to do if I don't do my practice (scores 5)

The list of parental tactics was based on my own experiences and the experiences of people I know. I devised a scoring system based on my views from a child's perspective. The scoring system ranged from zero to five. Zero was given to a tactic deemed not to be pressurising and five to a high-pressure tactic. There may be a level of subjectivity in these scores, as they were my views on pressure, e.g. some people may think that getting cross puts more pressure on children than rewarding them. Some parents use a variety of tactics, so to give a more appropriate weighting to the most commonly used tactics, I included a frequency-based element to the scoring system.

The tick box options included 'frequently', 'sometimes' and 'never'. 'Never' responses were given a score of zero. The response of 'sometimes' was given the score shown in parentheses following each statement, and doubled for a response of 'frequently'. The marks from each question were added together to give an overall score for parental pressure.

The list of possible parental tactics was not put in rank order by score on the questionnaire as I did not want to make it obvious what score I had allocated to each one thereby influencing their responses.

Future aspirations were investigated in a third question type with a mixture of open and closed questions. Scores were allocated so that the higher the score the higher the aspiration. It asked:

(1) When do you want to leave school?

The answers were given as two tick boxes, 16 or 18. If 16 was chosen it scored 1 and if 18 was chosen the score was 2.

(2) What do you want to do next? Job, university, college or other.

These were also given as tick boxes. If 'other' was chosen it scored zero, if 'job' was chosen it scored 1, if 'college' was chosen it scored 2 and if 'university' was chosen it scored 3. University was given a higher score than college as in university you tend to do more academic things such as medicine but in college you may do A levels or vocational courses.

(3) If university/college, which university/college do you want to go to and what do you want to study?

This was given as an open question with space to write the answer and a tick box for 'don't know'. Oxford and Cambridge were given a score of 3, other universities scored 2 and colleges scored 1. Subjects such as law, medicine, maths, science and languages all scored 3, subjects like the rest of the arts and social sciences scored 2 and subjects not requiring a degree scored 1.

(4) What do you want to be when you grow up?

This question was given in an open format, a 5-mark score system was used to analyse the responses, which was:

- Professionals scored 4 e.g. medicine, law, vicars and academics
- White-collar managerial and media scored 3 e.g. company directors, senior executives, journalists, filmmakers and writers.
- White collar clerical or skilled/semi-skilled labourers scored 2 e.g. carpenters, plumbers, builders, computer programmers, interior designers, hair dressers and computer operatives.
- Unskilled labourers scored 1 e.g. dustmen, shop assistants and cleaners.
- People who did not know or did not want to work scored 0.

More points were scored for answers that equated with higher ambitions.

Parental educational backgrounds and attitudes to higher education were investigated by the following questions:

(1) Did your parents go to university or college?

This was given as a tick box question (Responses: neither scored 0, one of them scored 1 and both of them scored 2).

(2) Do your parents want you to go to university/college?

This was given as a tick box question (Responses: yes scored 1 and no scored 0)

**Findings**

*Musical participation*

At Willow Bank, 70% of Year 7s have done some extracurricular music at some time, while at Plough Lane, the figure is 60%. Amongst those pupils that did or do music, the median musical participation score for Willow Bank is 2.5 and at Plough Lane it is 2.0. Neither of these differences is statistically significant. However, a much greater proportion of pupils at Willow Bank (41%) are currently taking part in extracurricular music than at Plough Lane (16%) (Figure 1). This difference in current participation is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 6.08, 2 \text{ d.f.}, P < 0.05$ ).

Although there is very little difference in the median musical participation values, there is more difference in the mean values. Willow Bank has a mean of 4.24 while Plough Lane has a mean of 2.79. This difference is not significant either, but it does show that several pupils at Willow Bank do a lot of music (eleven have a score greater than 5), while only a few do a lot at Plough Lane (only three have a score greater than 5). Therefore, it appears that while similar numbers of pupils start music at both schools, many more drop out at Plough Lane than at Willow Bank.

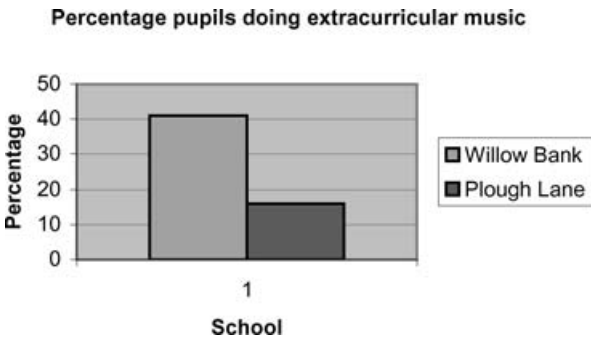


Fig. 1 Percentage pupils doing extracurricular music ( $\chi^2 = 6.08, 2 \text{ d.f.}, P < 0.05$ )

*Future aspirations*

When the future aspirations of all of the pupils in the study were compared, it was found that those children that do or did take part in extracurricular music have higher aspirations than those that have never done any extra music (Fig. 2). This effect is very highly significant ( $Z = 2.902, \text{ d.f. } 50, P < 0.001$ ).

In a comparison that excluded children who had never done any extracurricular music, it was found that at Willow Bank there is a highly significant positive correlation

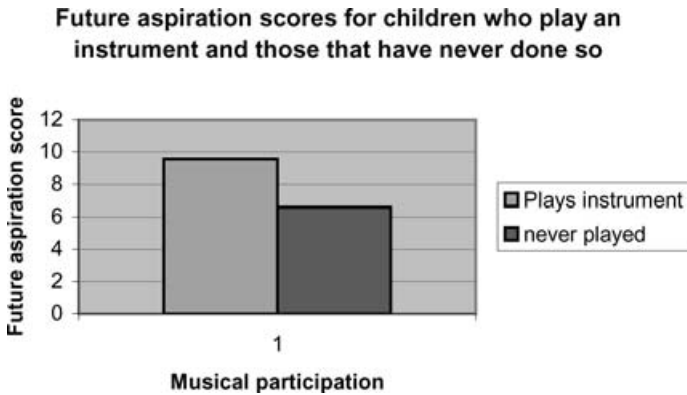


Fig. 2 Future aspiration scores for children who play an instrument now, and those that have never done so ( $Z = 2.902$ , d.f. 50,  $P < 0.001$ )

between musical participation and future aspirations ( $r_s = 0.536$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). In other words, the more music a child does, the higher their aspirations tend to be. By excluding the children that have never done any music, pupils for whom financial considerations were a serious barrier to musical participation were presumably left out. When only the Plough Lane data, with a much smaller sample size, were analysed, the link between the two factors was not quite strong enough to produce a significant correlation ( $r_s = 0.390$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). However, when the data from the two schools were combined, with equal numbers of values from each school being selected randomly, an overall statistically highly significant positive correlation between the two factors was found ( $r_s = 0.50$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ; Fig. 3).

#### *Factors affecting musical participation*

Interestingly, children's participation in musical activities does not seem to be linked to their enthusiasm for it, and parental pressure seems to influence neither how much a child enjoys their music nor how much music they do. However, there was a significant positive correlation between parents' enthusiasm for music and the child's musical participation at Willow Bank ( $r_s = 0.54$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), but not at Plough Lane ( $r_s = 0.15$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). It was found that there was no link between parental enthusiasm for their children to do music and how much pressure they put on the child to do their music: so the pushiest parents are not necessarily the most enthusiastic about their children doing music.

#### *Socio-economic factors*

Slightly unexpected was the finding that parental enthusiasm for music was not linked to whether either parent attended university ( $Z = 0.82$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ), and children that play musical instruments are no more likely to have university-educated parents than children who do not play instruments ( $\chi^2 = 1.46$ , 2 d.f.,  $P > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, children who play



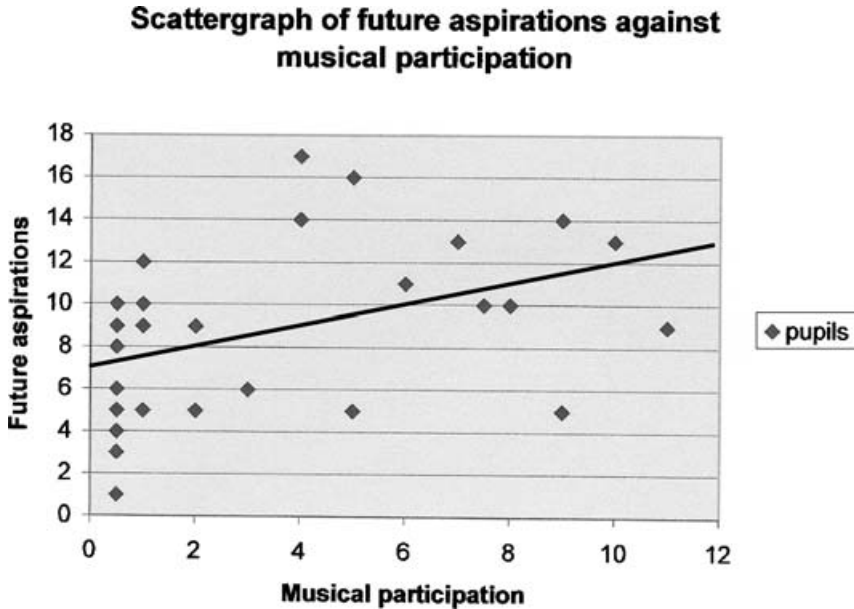


Fig. 3 Scattergraph of combined data, showing musical participation against future aspirations (data exclude those pupils who have never done any additional music;  $r_s = 0.50$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ; regression line:  $y = 0.5x + 6.69$ ,  $P < 0.05$ )

musical instruments are no more likely to have parents that want them to go to university than children who do not play musical instruments ( $\chi^2 = 1.36$ , 2 d.f.,  $P > 0.05$ ).

*Factors affecting future aspirations*

Neither the amount children enjoy music nor the extent of parental pressure to do music seem to be linked to children’s future aspirations. Perhaps more surprisingly, children’s future aspirations are apparently not affected by their parents’ education. The evidence here suggests it makes no difference to children’s future aspirations whether their parents went to university or college or not ( $Z = 1.54$ , d.f. 61,  $P > 0.05$ ). However, the data reveal a significant difference in future aspirations between pupils from the two schools ( $Z = 2.03$ , d.f. 78,  $P < 0.05$ ). The mean value for Willow Bank is 6.75 and that for Plough Lane is 8.44 (Fig. 4).

It is worth noting that the percentages of parents who had attended college or university at the two schools were not statistically significantly different; 57% of the parents at Willow Bank and 51% at Plough Lane were said to have gone on to further/higher education. The children were also of the opinion that the vast majority of parents wanted them to go on to college or university; 85% at Willow Bank and 72% at Plough Lane. This difference is not statistically significant either.

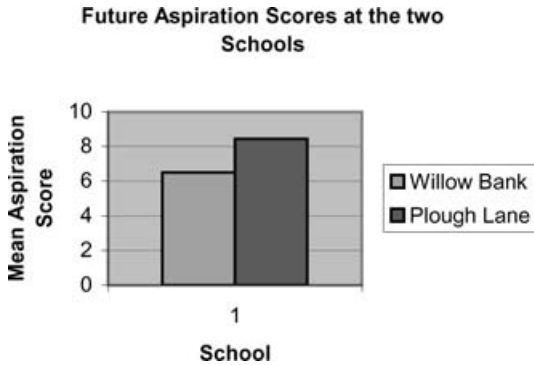


Fig. 4 Mean future aspiration scores at the two schools ( $Z = 2.03$ , d.f. 78,  $P < 0.05$ )

### Discussion

The most important finding is that on the basis of these data, high future aspirations are linked to high musical participation. The more music a child does the higher their aspirations tend to be. However, what are the underlying causes of this correlation?

#### *Quality of the data*

The data may be flawed in some ways, either because the scoring system is inappropriate, or the amount of data is inadequate. The latter is probably not a major factor because there was a 100% return rate, i.e. 80 questionnaires were returned, which is quite a large number. However, the validity of the scores may be variable: The musical participation questions give a very clear view of the amount of music the children do because a lot of quite detailed information was collected and the children could answer the objective questions easily.

The questions on future aspirations only focused on the child's academic or employment aspirations while in Year 7. So many of the children may just be beginning to think about what they will do when they leave school. They may not understand the full implications of getting a college or university education, or the real requirements for getting particular jobs. Therefore, some of the responses may be unrealistic, which may go some way towards explaining the apparently higher future aspirations at Plough Lane than Willow Bank.

The questions about the child's musical enjoyment are more subjective than those relating to participation, and so could be affected by the mood of the child at the time the questionnaire was being filled in. However, as the same questions were asked about the parents' attitudes, the scores give a good impression of any contrast in views between the parents and the child, e.g. the child says they hate exams, but they think their parents like them doing exams a lot. Therefore, what you get is the child's view of what they believe their parents think, not necessarily what their parents really think; this is valuable as parents may feel they are being supportive, but the child may think they don't care or are pushy.

The parental pressure questions attempt to get the real feelings of the child's point of view of their parents. Are they just supportive parents, pushy or don't they care at all? The questions are quite detailed and the opportunity to say how often the parents adopt each tactic is a good way of finding out how the child perceives the parents' attitude.

There was only one question on parents' education on the questionnaire. Children may not know much about university or college, so they may have been confused. Also parents may have gone to college to do 'A' levels or a vocational qualification rather than a degree. The question does not distinguish between the two options. Therefore, there may be some error in this particular finding. This is an aspect that could be looked into in greater detail in a further study.

Framing of the questions to avoid ambiguity was quite difficult; it was hard to define exactly what was meant by musical participation without making the questions too long and complicated. In the event the participants had no real trouble interpreting the questions and gave the sorts of answers that were expected. For example they did not write down listening to CDs, the radio or going to dance classes where music is involved but they are not actually playing it. Maybe there is a temptation to over-analyse the questions and thereby patronise the participants, especially when they are children.

In the allocating of marks in the future aspiration section it was occasionally difficult to allocate a score to a response. One or two participants wrote something that did not fall easily into any one category or wrote down two things that were entirely different from each other e.g. doctor and zookeeper.

Some people may think that this child-led study has not got any closer to a young person's view than an adult-led research study. However, a child's perspective is evident in two ways. The questionnaire is written by a child and scored by a child. The list of possible parental tactics and the scores allocated to them were a young person's views. In terms of the participants, the child's perspective is not in the wording of the responses, but in how the child conveys their understanding of the situation through the answers they give. A parent completing the questions on behalf of their child might give a very different set of answers.

#### *Children's attitudes*

There is no difference in the children's enjoyment of music at the two schools, and there was no link between it and musical participation, which suggests that the children's views are largely irrelevant when it comes to doing extracurricular music. Alternatively, it may be that children find it difficult to quantify their enjoyment of music because they like playing it, but other aspects of it, such as practising and taking exams, they might not enjoy so much.

#### *Socio-economic factors*

There is a lot of evidence in the literature that the cultural background of the parents can influence children's educational and career ambitions as well as their participation in extracurricular activities, such as music. There is a clear difference in the average affluence of the parents at the two schools. Quite a high proportion of children at Plough Lane have

free school dinners (16%) while only one child at Willow Bank does so. Therefore, it could be seen as surprising that the children at Plough Lane appeared to have higher aspirations than the children at Willow Bank. This finding may be because some children at Plough Lane have unrealistic expectations and list jobs they like the sound of, even if they have no realistic chance of realising their ambition. Alternatively, the children at Willow Bank may know that they want to enter a profession, but they have not yet decided which one. There is evidence that students from low socio-economic backgrounds, who do not go on to college, often make unrealistic job choices for which they are not qualified. They look for glamorous occupations, which they think their parents or peers would consider desirable, instead of focusing on their own capabilities (Rice, 2002).

#### *Parental attitudes and education*

There is no indication that the pushy parents have the most musical children with the highest ambitions. The most important factor in determining musical participation seems to be the parents' enthusiasm for it. These results support previous findings. Children need parental support and encouragement not only to succeed in academic and social aspects of school, but also to fulfil their true potential in later life. However, parents who are too demanding and critical can lower the child's self-esteem and motivation. These children often end up underachieving (Rice, 2002).

There is no evidence from this study that parental enthusiasm for musical participation is linked to how highly educated they are themselves, or their attitude to their children's education. The finding that there was no significant difference either in the proportion of parents at the two schools that had been to college or university, or wanted their children to go on to higher education was unexpected. As mentioned above, there could be some error in assessing these parameters. Nevertheless, the children's perception appears to be that there is little difference in the educational background and attitudes of the parents at the two schools, which is probably the most important factor in this case. There was no difference in the enthusiasm of the parents for musical participation at the two schools. Consequently, musical participation does not seem to be as closely linked to the cultural background of the parents as might be anticipated.

These data suggest that neither musical participation nor future aspirations are closely linked to the cultural background of the parents. Therefore, the close correlation between these two key factors would appear to be a function of the musical participation itself.

#### *Financial aspects*

Finances are likely to affect musical participation now and in the past. Results show that even though similar proportions of children have done music at some time, there is currently much greater participation in music at Willow Bank than at Plough Lane. The minority of children who do a lot of music at Willow Bank is greater than at Plough Lane, even though overall musical participation scores for the two schools are similar. Cost could be a deciding factor. It may mean that children do little or no music when finances are tight. Cost may also be why a higher proportion of children drop out of music early on at Plough Lane than

at Willow Bank. These results support Yang's contention that families of modest means do not lack aspirations, but may lack the resources to achieve them (Yang, 2002).

### Conclusions

In conclusion these results suggest that the reason children who do lots of music also have high future aspirations is not because the parents of these musical children are also highly educated professionals with high aspirations for their children. It looks as if it is the musical participation itself that leads to higher aspirations.

The major factor determining musical participation, within an individual school, would appear to be the enthusiasm of the parents for their children to do music. However, the difference in musical participation between the two schools is probably largely due to a difference in finances. It does not seem to depend on the cultural background of parents at the two schools, as they appear, at least from the children's perspective, to have similar educational backgrounds and attitudes to higher education. Parents at the two schools are also equally enthusiastic that their offspring should do extra music. The key difference is probably that the parents at Willow Bank have, on average, more money so their children can take part in a lot of musical activities, while at Plough Lane, even though the parents may want their children to do lots of music, the cost factor may be a barrier.

When schools face financial difficulties, extracurricular activities, especially music, are often the first things to be cut. The findings of this study indicate that musical participation can not only raise academic performance but also raise children's future aspirations. Therefore, such a short-sighted view of educational funding should be challenged. Indeed it could be argued that funding for music should be increased.

### Acknowledgements

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## Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

### *Attitudes to extracurricular music activities survey*

My name is Eleanor Denny and I am a 12-year-old researcher from the Children's Research Centre at The Open University. I am carrying out my own research project about what children think and feel about extracurricular music activities (this includes instrument lessons taken at school). None of the answers given will be traceable to any individual and they will only be used for the purpose of this research, so please be completely honest in your answers as this helps me to collect accurate data.

Please tick the box that applies to you, or provide the information requested

1. Boy  Girl

2. Do you take part in music activities (including singing as well as playing an instrument) outside school, or have individual instrument lessons at school, or have you done so in the past?

Yes  No, never  Not now, but I have done so in the past

If you have answered 'No, never', please answer question 3 and then answer questions 10–15.

If you have answered 'Yes' or 'Done so in the past' skip question 3 then carry on from question 4 completing all the questions.

3. If 'No, never' please write down the names of any instrument you would like to play (if you would like to sing, please write down 'voice')

I think I would like to play the following:

- A
- B
- C
- D

Do you think your parents would like you to play any of these instruments?

No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Why?

4. If 'Yes' or 'Done so in the past', please list the instrument(s) you play or played. Put instruments you used to play in brackets. Indicate the approximate standard you have achieved and say whether you like your musical activity and also whether you think your parents like you playing the instrument(s).

Using the key, please tick the relevant box.

Key	1 = like it a lot	2 = like it	3 = don't mind	4 = not very keen	5 = hate it								
Instrument	Approx. grade	Exam taken? Yes/No	How much do you like(d) playing your instrument(s)?					How much do you think your parents like(d) you playing the instrument(s)?					
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

5. Do you belong to any musical groups (e.g. band, orchestra, choir)?

Yes  No

If Yes, please say which groups you belong to:

6. Do you take part in any musical performances or competitions?

Performances Yes  No

Competitions Yes  No

**(whatever your answer please fill in table below)**

7. How do you feel about doing music exams, competitions and performances, and what is your parents' attitude to them? Complete the table using the key for Qu. 4.

What my parents do	frequently	sometimes	never
They praise me when I do well			
They promise to give me rewards if I do well			
They tell me they expect me to do my best			
They don't do or say anything			
They punish me/tell me off if I do badly			
They reward me depending on how well I do			
They give me rewards when I have done well			
They tell me how I could have done better			
They give me praise when I have tried hard			
Other (please describe)			

Musical Activity	How much do you like exams, competitions and performances?					How much do you think your parents like you taking part in them?				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Exams										
Group playing										
Performances										
Competitions										

What my parents do	frequently	sometimes	never
They get cross if I don't practise			
They give me a reward if I practise			
They just tell me to do it			
They make me feel guilty if I don't practise			
They stop me doing something I like to do if I don't do my practise			
They leave me to get on with it if and when I want to			
Other (please describe)			

8. How do your parents encourage you in your musical activity(s)?

9. How do your parents encourage you to practise for your musical activity(s)?

10. When do you want to leave school? At 16  At 18

11. When you leave school what do you want to do next?

Job  University  College  Other

If you ticked 'other', please specify: .....



12. If you ticked University/College which University/College do you want to go to and what do you want to study?

University/College ..... Don't know yet

Subject ..... Don't know yet

13. Did your parents go to university or college?

Neither  One of them  Both of them

14. Do your parents want you to go to university/college? Yes  No

15. What do you want to do when you are grown up? .....

Don't Know yet