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The Nucleo Project

# Annual Report

*For the year ending 31st August 2019*



Charity Number 1169328  
Company Number 08959020

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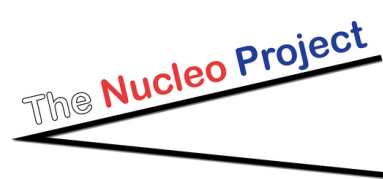
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# Company Information



*Charity number 1169328*

*Company number 08959020*

## **Trustees**

The trustees are also the directors of the company for purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The trustees who served during the period were:

I C Brunner

R A Davey (co-chair)

S Hermer

C N C Hodges (co-chair)

S Reasbeck

J Cameron \*appointed after this period

## **Key Management**

Lucy Maguire (CEO)

Sophie Drysdale (COO)

## **Registered office**

128 Freston Road, London W10 6TR

## **Bankers**

Lloyds Bank, 50 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3JD

## **Independent examiner**

Blackwood Futcher & Co.

Chartered Accountants

9 St Georges Yard, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7LW

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# Letter from the Co-Chairs

The 2018-2019 academic year has seen further growth in participation in The Nucleo Project's ambitious musical endeavours in North Kensington. Meanwhile, we have continued to strengthen our organisational resilience as we seek to build a sustainable future for the charity.

The Nucleo Project's purpose is to achieve social change in our community through music. The focus continues to be on the pursuit of musical excellence and the achievements of the children are an inspiration to the community of North Kensington. This year Nucleo children have taken up places at some of the most prestigious institutions, including the Royal College Of Music Junior Department, the National Schools Symphony Orchestra and the National Children's Orchestra. Our young musicians also emerged victorious in a multitude of categories at the LVS Ascot Music Festival. In February, our 6th Anniversary concert took place at Porchester Hall, allowing all the children to perform and celebrate together during an evening that will live long in memory.

The Nucleo Project continues to expand, with over 330 children enrolled in this year. A notable new addition to our provision is the introduction of the Traveller programme, providing classes for the children of North Kensington's Stable Way Traveller site. This diversification of our work is testament to the inclusive nature of the project and its capacity and will to reach all members of a diverse local population.

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With the reputation of The Nucleo Project's musical activity growing all the time, the board of trustees continues to be mindful of organisational resilience and forward planning. The recruitment of a Chief Operations Officer has increased administrative and strategic capacity and ensures that the charity is better prepared for the challenges that face a growing organisation. We continue to broaden our sources of funding and develop our financial systems in order that we can provide stability for students, staff and the entire Nucleo community going forward.

Finally, we would like to thank the many kind supporters of The Nucleo Project, including trusts, foundations, local charities and private individuals. We are also extremely grateful for the time, dedication and expertise of our fellow trustees. All of the above play an instrumental role in allowing us to deliver inspirational music opportunities to the children of North Kensington.

Chris Hodges and Richard Davey, Co-chairs of Trustees

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## Year in Review

*2018-19 was a year of both consolidation and growth for The Nucleo Project.*

At the start of the 2018-19 academic year, Nucleo faced a number of challenges, not least of which was to quickly and successfully fill some significant gaps in our teaching team. Four members of our core teaching team moved on from Nucleo at the end of the 2017-18 academic year, and this represented a significant challenge to ensure continuity and consistent quality for the students we serve. We were fortunate to find strong

replacements and were able to train them in Nucleo's unique approach and assimilate them into our 'family'. Having successfully tackled this obstacle, the Nucleo teaching team is stronger and more committed than ever, and we have growing confidence in our ability to recruit and train high-quality teachers and continue to provide teaching excellence for our students through any future personnel changes.

Our enrolment has grown from just over 300 at the beginning of the academic year to a total of 327 at the end of July. The Nucleo Project continues to serve a diverse community in which a high proportion of children are socially disadvantaged. We hope to continue to make our programme accessible to the local children who need it most.

This year has seen continued strong progress across all Nucleo ensembles, of which there are now eight. It has been particularly exciting to see our students hitting milestones at younger ages, which foretells bright futures for the coming generations of Nucleo musicians.

One of the major new developments is that children can now join The Nucleo Project from birth. In January 2019 we started our first weekly group for 0-2 year-olds and their parents/carers. Our ambition has always been to create a complete pathway for children and young people aged 0-18, in the belief that this is the best way to nurture children's potential and parental engagement. We look forward to seeing our first group of Nucleo infants develop as young musicians over the coming years.

This year also saw the development of our Traveller project, run in collaboration with the Westway Trust. This involves working with a group of Traveller children who live on a permanent Traveller site under the Westway, one of the country's busiest roads. The project runs at Oxford Gardens Primary School, which most primary-aged children from the site attend. This year we provided weekly music lessons for 16 Traveller children at the school, as well as offering fortnightly music lessons to two Traveller children at Beachcroft Alternative Provision, a specialist school for children with learning and behavioural difficulties. Although our Traveller members do not benefit from such an intensive programme as those in the wider group,



they are nevertheless making excellent progress. To celebrate this, we held two concerts for the Traveller community, starring the children, this year. One took place just before Christmas on the Traveller site and was well-attended by parents. The other was a short end of summer term performance at Oxford Gardens Primary School.

On 12th February 2019 we celebrated our sixth birthday with a very memorable evening at Porchester Hall. Over 300 young performers aged 3+ were involved. Our audience enjoyed music by Beethoven, Purcell, Holst and the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. They were also treated to a very special performance of Cécile Chaminade's Flute Concertino performed by 16-year-old Rebekah Christie, one of Nucleo's founding members and winner of the first Nucleo Project Concerto Prize (launched this year). She was accompanied by the Plus Ensemble, Nucleo's most advanced group of young musicians.

2018-19 has been another year of success for our most promising young musicians. This year seven young people from Nucleo have been selected for the National Children's Orchestra and seven will be joining the Royal College of Music Junior Department in September 2019. We also had our first student sit an ABRSM grade 8 exam this summer, aged just 12.





Throughout the year we have been supporting our most committed and promising young musicians by offering them extra tuition. Our Scholarship Programme has supported 32 children through this academic year, offering weekly individual or paired lessons on their instrument. This is in addition to our main provision of 6+ weekly hours of group rehearsals, in which all Nucleo students take part .

Summer 2019 was also packed full of music-making opportunities outside the main Nucleo programme. Ten students auditioned successfully for the National Schools Symphony Orchestra, and attended a week-long residential course at Malvern College culminating in a performance at Birmingham Symphony Hall. Seven Nucleo children attended the National Children's Orchestra's summer camps, and three joined the National Orchestra for All in their 2019-20 season.





# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

## **Governing Document**

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

## **Organisation Structure**

The trustees have overall authority for the charity, determining its strategic direction and ensuring compliance. Lucy Maguire, the founder and CEO, and Sophie Drysdale, the COO, report regularly to the board and work closely with the co-chairs.

## **Recruitment, Appointment, Induction and Training of Trustees**

The trustees consider that a board size of six members is appropriate for The Nucleo Project (at present we are seeking to add one more member to the board). Trustees are recruited with a view to filling any gaps in the expertise that we identify as important for a balanced and capable board. Before being appointed, all potential trustees attend one or two meetings as an observer, make a site visit to see the project in action, and meet with the co-chairs and/or the CEO to discuss the charity and the role of the trustees. Trustees are appointed to the board for a term of 2 years, and may serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

### Related Organisations

The Nucleo Project is linked to The Dalgarno Trust, with whom we have a space hire agreement. The bulk of our activities are delivered on their premises.

The Nucleo Project is a part of the global El Sistema network, a network of organisations with a similar philosophy and aims, all of which work under the principal of ‘social action through music’.

In particular, The Nucleo Project maintains close relationships with Sistema England and organisations in the Sistema Europe network, and is a member of the Sistema Europe association. No other organisation has control or influence over our policies, operations or activities, however, beyond the sharing of ideas and occasional collaborations on projects.





## OBJECTIVES

The Nucleo Project's charitable objects are to advance in life and help young people through:

- a) The provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life; and
- b) Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.

The Nucleo Project offers musical education and musical ensemble participation opportunities to children and young people, breaking down barriers to access by running our programme at no cost to participants.

**The project is based in North Kensington, ranked within 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.**

The Nucleo Project strives to bring together children from across the full spectrum of the local community, to work together towards musical goals. Through our work, we aim to develop not only their musical abilities but also their personal and social skills, with the ultimate goal of helping to broaden their horizons and equip them to fulfil their potential as members of a community, and as individuals in whatever life paths they choose.

# ACTIVITIES

The Nucleo Project is an after-school programme offering musical education for children aged 0 to 18. All activities are free and instruments are provided (also for free) to all participants. The Nucleo Project is open to any child between the ages of 0 and 18 who is able to commit to attending the minimum number of weekly sessions required for his/her age group. Our core programme of activities consists of:

## Ages 0-2 MOTHER & BABY

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av. 15 children, 1-2 sessions per week.

## Ages 2-4 EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME

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av. 30 children, 1-2 sessions per week - musicianship classes (ages 2-4) and group violin lessons (ages 3-4).

## Ages 4-7 STRING ORCHESTRA PROGRAMME

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av. 90 children, 3-5 sessions per week – participation in a string orchestra and/or group instrumental lessons. Violin, viola, cello and double bass.

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## Ages 7+ FULL ORCHESTRA PROGRAMME

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av. 180 children, 4-6 sessions per week – participation in an orchestra, including sectional rehearsals, workshops and instrumental group lessons. Violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, percussion.

## All ages MUSICIANSHIP PROGRAMME

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all students, 1 session per week – classes focused on musicianship, musical literacy and music theory.

## All ages PERFORMANCES

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all students who have begun learning an instrument, at least 1 performance per term, enabling them to gain confidence and providing them with an opportunity to express themselves.

## Advanced students SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

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av. 30 advanced musicians, 1 session per week – additional individual or paired instrumental lessons offered to students of advanced ability and potential.

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## PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Organisational Progress**

This was another year of change on The Nucleo Project's team. Last year our Operations Manager went on maternity leave and took the decision not to return to work following the birth of her child. Her employment with us ended on 31 December 2018. Our Operations Manager had made some excellent progress while in her role, improving information flow around the organisation, helping us manage our finances more effectively, playing a key role in staff recruitment, managing the development of our website, helping us store data more effectively and managing relationships with key external funders. The CEO and the board took the joint decision that what was needed

to replace her was a full-time senior position of COO, enabling the post holder to lead on all aspects of operations.

We are delighted to share that this post has now been filled. Sophie Drysdale joined us on 23rd April 2019 and is already helping us make significant progress in terms of systems, logistics, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and fundraising.

In December 2018 our freelance fundraiser stepped down and Sam Case stepped back into the role. It has been a reasonable year for fundraising performance, with £325k raised this financial year, compared with £251k for the complete 2017-18 financial year. However, as a young organisation with limited reserves it is essential that we manage our spending carefully, to ensure the organisation is stable going forwards.

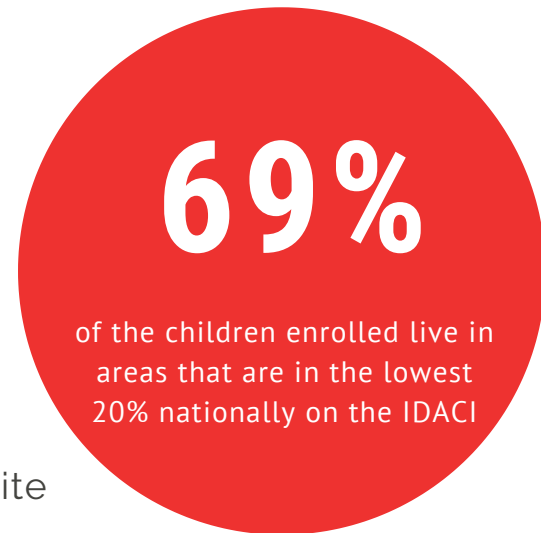
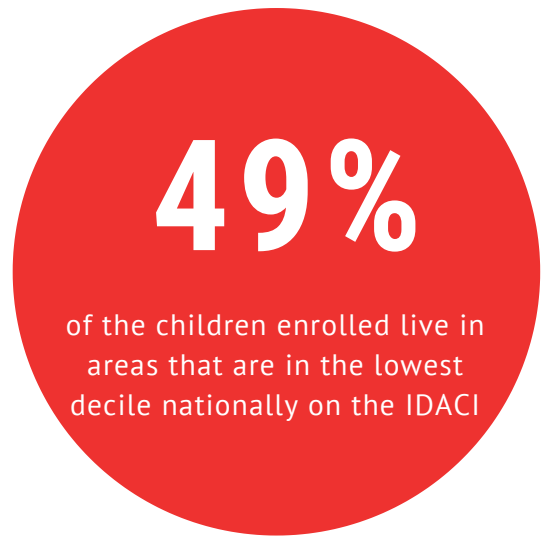
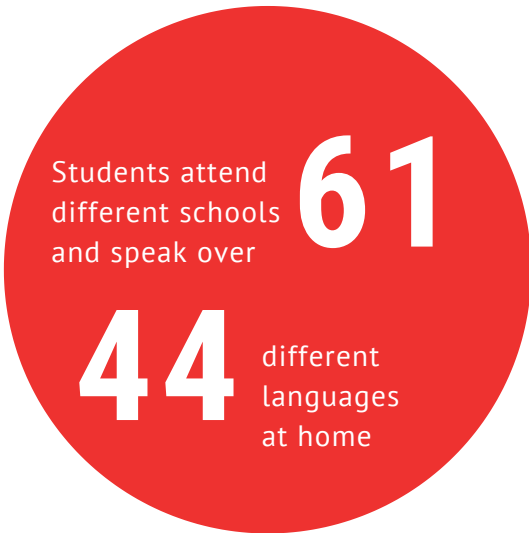
It is our policy to avoid running a deficit and so measures were taken in order to manage cashflow and expenditure. These consisted of reducing the number of weeks of programme delivery in 2018-19 to 30 and reducing some of our spend on special programming. While not an easy decision, it was decided that the disadvantages to children of running a shorter programme were far outweighed by the advantages of a sustainable programme in the future. We would like to be able to run the full 36 weeks of the school year, but this ambition has to be balanced with financial risk.

Over the last year The Nucleo Project has remained at the Dalgarno Trust, which has been our home since 2015. While our relationship with the Trust remains strong, the Trust is looking to diversify the use of its community space. Finding a long-term home in the local area is a key objective for the team.



# ACCESS AND INCLUSION

During the period of reporting:  
Based on English Indices of Deprivation 2015

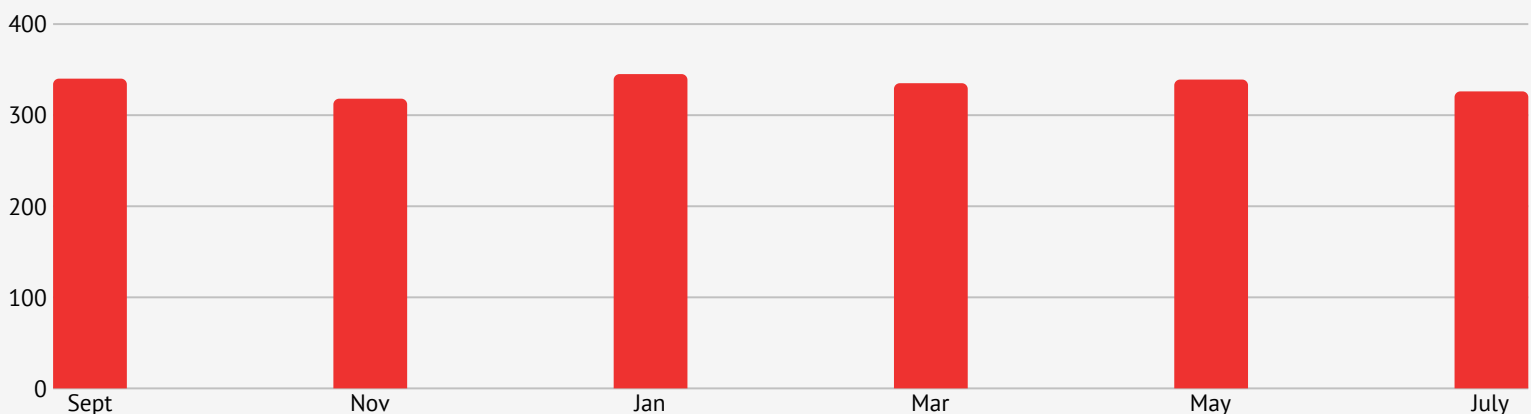


## TRAVELLER PROGRAMME

18 children from the local travellers' site enrolled in a special programme delivered in collaboration with The Westway Trust and Oxford Gardens Primary School.

## ENROLMENT FOR THE YEAR

In 2018 enrolment increased from 300 to an average of 333 students.





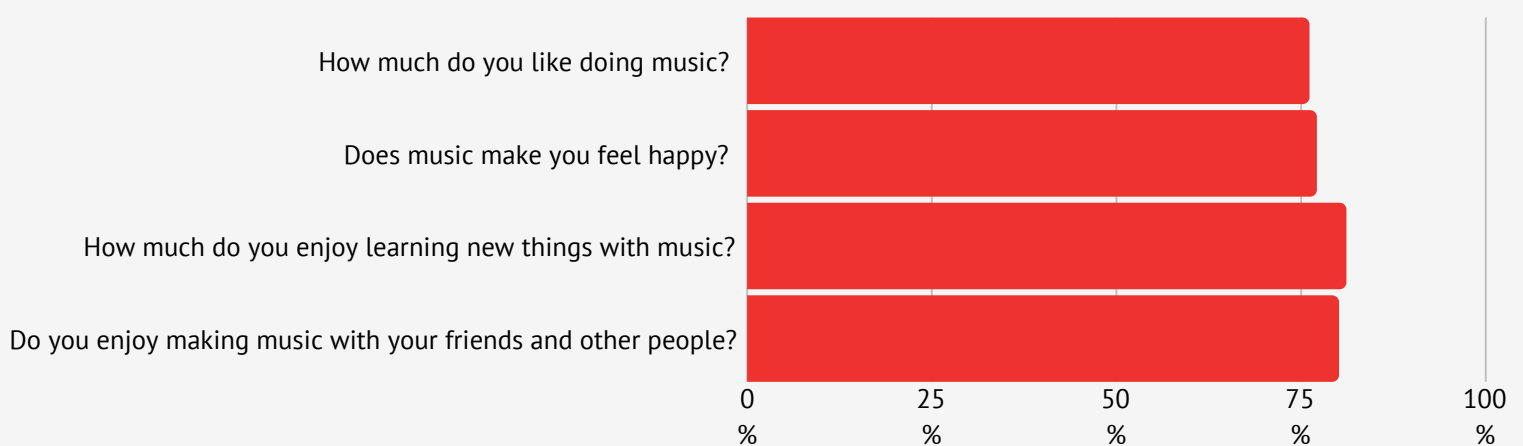
# MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

During the period of reporting:



## ASSESSMENT OF MUSICAL PROGRESS

Student self-assessment based on the Youth Music Young Musicians Development Scale



Teacher assessment, based on progress over the academic year





## PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

*Our key objectives for the future are:*

- To secure premises that are suitable for our growing programme in terms of both facilities and location
- To continue to build and develop our team of employees and freelance consultants
- To diversify funding streams and develop sustainable income streams, and increases in core funding and repeat or long-term donations
- To continue to approach our outcome measurement in a more detailed and developed way
- To develop communications and continue building our reputation as a leader in our field
- To consider growth beyond the current capacity of our teaching site and teaching team
- To gradually increase the number of children engaged in our programme from just over 300 (September 2018) to 400. This will represent our ideal long-term size for the project in North Kensington
- To continue to deliver a high-quality, ensemble-based music education programme for students in our community
- To continue to deliver a programme that attracts and brings together a wide range of families from across our diverse community



# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## Reserves Policy

Management of cashflow and expenditure are priorities for The Nucleo Project. It is our policy that a minimum level of reserves should be held equivalent to:

- 1 month of staff costs
- 3 months of rent
- 18 months of telephone contract fees
- Plus any other contractual liabilities

Any current or new obligations should become effective in the actual reserves level within 24 months.

## Funding Sources

The principal funding source for The Nucleo Project during the reporting period has continued to be grants from trusts and foundations. These can either be designated for general and ongoing running costs, or for the delivery of specific projects within the scope of our activities.

## Risk Management

The trustees recognise their responsibility for the management of risks faced by the charity (both financial and otherwise). A risk register is maintained by one of the co-chairs and reviewed annually by the board, or whenever an arising risk is brought to their attention.

At present, the greatest risk to the charity is the human resource risk that arises due to significant dependence on key members of the delivery team. The charity plans to mitigate this over the coming years by building, developing and training the team in order to reduce this dependence. As we grow we are cognisant that space is an issue and so we are actively engaging with other institutions to source larger premises.

## Public Benefit

The trustees have had due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and are confident that the activities of the charity provide current and on-going benefit to the public.