

# Annual Report

*For the year ending 31st August 2020*



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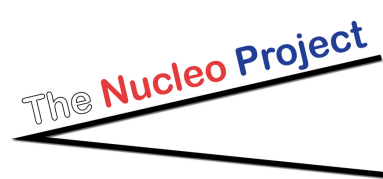
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# Company Information



*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

## **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 2019-2020 academic year proved to be an extraordinarily challenging year for The Nucleo Project and the community it serves in North Kensington and North Westminster.

Through a combination of the immense dedication and skill of all the Nucleo team led by founder Lucy Maguire, the adaptability and commitment of our young musicians and their families and our planned investment in administrative capacity, we were nevertheless still able to deliver close to 5,000 hours of teaching and ensemble playing throughout the year with only a brief hiatus in mid-March.

The Nucleo Project's purpose is to achieve social change in our community through the medium of an intensive ensemble experience. Our focus continues to be the pursuit of musical excellence and the many achievements of Nucleo musicians detailed in the following report act as an inspiration for our community. Perhaps the highlight of the year was our 7th anniversary concert featuring more than 300 children and young musicians who came together to perform and celebrate on one joyous night in pre-lockdown West London. Another significant highlight (and a first) was winning the GlobalGiving Accelerator crowdfunding challenge during a three-week campaign, rounded off with a spectacular online recital by the Nucleo young musicians.

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As we highlighted in our letter last year, our investment in administrative capacity through the strengthening of our organisational design was intended to make our charity "better prepared for the challenges that face a growing organisation". Building on that work the Trustees commissioned and completed a Strategic Review during this academic year. The primary purpose of the review was to help identify and map out our opportunities for growth. The review drew not only the opinions and insights of Nucleo's leadership team and its Board of Trustees but also the insights and analysis from our broader group of stakeholders. As a result, the Trustees and leadership team feel well prepared to follow through on our growth plan when the Covid health crisis abates.

Finally, as The Nucleo Project remains entirely free to our young musicians, we would like to thank our growing number of supporters. We are especially grateful for the loyal support from visionary charitable trusts and foundations, prominent local charities and many highly motivated private individuals. We are also grateful for the freely given time, dedication and expertise of our fellow trustees. All of the above play a vital role in enabling The Nucleo Project to deliver inspirational opportunities to our beneficiaries - the children and young people of North Kensington and Westminster.

Chris Hodges and Richard Davey, Co-chairs of Trustees

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## Year in Review

*2019-20 was a year of change, challenge and resilience for The Nucleo Project.*

Despite the huge upheaval caused by Covid-19, The Nucleo Project continues to be a thriving and popular 'music for social action' programme in our local community.

In 2019-20 enrolment grew from 327 at the beginning of the academic year to a total of 338 in March, prior to lockdown. This continued popularity did however put pressure on our facilities at the Dalgarno Trust.

And so we found a new home for our main sessions at Queen's Park Primary School, where we started working in September. We were delighted to have found a site so well-suited to our needs and settled in quickly thanks to the kindness and support of the school staff and community.

We continued to serve a diverse community in which a high proportion of children are socially disadvantaged. In Kensington & Chelsea 37.3% of children live in poverty and twice as many state school children are eligible for free school meals as the national average. Ensuring that our programme is accessible to the local children who need it most is a continued priority for us.

We also made improvements to our teaching programme. From September 2019, we offered brass, woodwind and percussion instruments to younger children from the age of 5, whereas previously all our junior students started on string instruments. This will enable us to achieve the same strong musical results at early ages in all sections of the orchestra, as we have already begun to do for the strings.

We also launched our new Stripes Orchestra for more advanced young string players 9 and under. This enables us to teach these talented youngsters in a way that is appropriate for their age group without restricting their ambition.

Stripes now has 43 members who are making great progress. Creating a new orchestra has also released places in existing junior ensembles for less experienced players.

The first half of the year offered some wonderful opportunities to showcase our students' talent. On 27th November 2019 we held our annual Celebration Recital at St John's Church, Notting Hill. While most of our activities are focused on orchestral playing, each year this event celebrates the pinnacle of achievement in solo and chamber performances across all age-groups at Nucleo.



In December 2019 we held our second annual Concerto Competition, which was once again judged by composer (and founding member of the Nucleo board of trustees) Edmund Jolliffe. This year's winner was 14-year-old Daniel Jurado Hoshino, who subsequently performed as a soloist at our anniversary concert in February. This year's concert celebrated the 7th anniversary of The Nucleo Project, and was held at Porchester Hall on 12th February 2020. Our afternoon performances featured the members of Nucleo's younger and more junior ensembles, while the main event in the evening showcased our Stripes, Junior Symphony and Symphony Orchestras, as well as our advanced Plus Ensemble.

Daniel's performance of Faure's *Elegie* for Cello and Orchestra, accompanied by the Plus Ensemble, was a highlight. The concert ended with all four orchestras gathering on stage to perform a rousing rendition of our signature encores. We can't imagine when we will next be able to cram over 100 children onto one stage, which makes this memory all the more precious.

Throughout the last year we have been supporting our best young musicians through our scholarship programme, which has enabled 30 of our most committed and promising young musicians to receive weekly individual or paired lessons on their instrument.





This is in addition to the group rehearsals and group lessons in which they take part. In spite of all the challenges this year has brought, we are thrilled to report that some of our young musicians still managed to prove themselves among the best in the whole country.

In December six children took ABRSM examinations, with all achieving either merit or distinction. And ten young people were offered places in the National Children's Orchestra.

In February four musicians auditioned successfully for the Chineke! Junior Orchestra, joining three older Nucleo musicians who were already members.

And this coming September three more Nucleo students will be joining the Royal College of Music Junior Programme, where they will join four Nucleo students continuing to study there.

One Nucleo student was offered a place at Wells Cathedral School as a music specialist, starting this September. We are sorry to see him go, but enormously excited for him about the opportunities that lie ahead.

Our young people have had so much to contend with this year: we are so proud of what they have achieved in very difficult circumstances.



In March, the UK went into lockdown with very little notice, which meant that for a brief period we could not operate at all. However, we were all determined that while the lockdown meant the cancellation of many things in our students' lives, music would not be one of them. We worked quickly to plan and launch an online programme, which we trialled over the Easter holiday. This involved a huge effort on the part of our senior management team and our teachers, who quickly had to adapt to new ways of working. Following a successful pilot, we began offering online sessions at the start of the summer term.

Uptake of our online programme was relatively strong, with 241 children participating. Although we contacted all families about the existence of our online programme and encouraged their participation, not all joined: some children were less keen to get involved online, while for others it was an issue of internet and/or computer access. We were able to provide a handful of tablets for students who would not otherwise have been able to join online lessons, and our "Nucleo home delivery service" kept our students provided with new reeds, replacement strings and rosins, as well as swapping and upgrading outgrown instruments, and even attempting a few amateur repairs.



Our concert at Leighton House, planned for April, was sadly cancelled because of the pandemic. But we weren't deterred and held our first ever online recital on the 17th June, which was a great success. 415 people tuned in on the evening to watch the performance, which was presented by one of our students and is still available to view on YouTube. It was a great opportunity for the children to show how hard they had been practising during lockdown and it was also our first foray into virtual event fundraising. In our efforts to keep the Nucleo

community connected throughout the summer term, we created a number of videos and online challenges which we shared on social media. Perhaps the highlight was our "Thank you NHS" video, made in May, which featured performances by over 100 Nucleo students, parents and teachers and can still be viewed on YouTube.

Keeping our children playing through lockdown was a true team effort by the whole Nucleo community, and we were inspired by the efforts and attitudes of our children, parents and staff.



In July, since we could not come together for our usual end-of-year performances, we ended our summer term with a series of 15 Zoom recitals for our students and parents, in which children from all Nucleo groups had the opportunity to perform and demonstrate what they learned this year.

It wasn't quite how we had envisioned ending the school year when we started it back in September, but as always, the performances reminded us of the great strides our children and young people are making, and inspired us to look forward to another fantastic year together at Nucleo – whatever it may bring!





# 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. 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 a part of the global El Sistema network, a network of organisations all of which work under the principal of 'social action through music'. Nucleo is a member of the Sistema Europe association and close relationships are maintained with Sistema England and the Sistema Europe network. 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, where 37.3% of children live in poverty.**

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.

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# ACTIVITIES

The Nucleo Project is an after-school programme offering ensemble-based music education for children and young people from the age of 0. 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:

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## Ages 0-2

av. 15 children, 1 session per week.

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## Ages 3-4

av. 30 children, 1-2 sessions per week - musicianship classes and group lessons on a string instrument (violin, viola, cello or double bass).

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## Ages 4-7

av. 90 children, 3-5 sessions per week - participation in an orchestra and/or group instrumental lessons. Violin, viola, cello, double bass, recorder, cornet or percussion.

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## Ages 7+

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.

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## All ages

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

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## All ages PERFORMANCES

all students who have begun learning an instrument, at least 1 performance per term, helping them to gain confidence and providing them with an opportunity to share what they have learned with friends and family and take pride in their achievements.

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## Advanced students SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

av. 30 advanced musicians, 1 session per week - additional individual or paired instrumental lessons offered to students who demonstrate particular potential and a high level of commitment to their musical studies.

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## PERFORMANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Organisational Progress**

A lot of important work has been taking place behind the scenes at Nucleo this year. We have been working with a strategy consultant who identified four key areas for development: reducing our reliance on our founder/CEO, developing greater proof of impact, working on youth leadership and broadening our funding sources. From these four key aims we developed a detailed consolidation plan, with improvements already in evidence. On the 15th April 2020 two Deputy Programme Directors were appointed, who now manage a lot of the logistical work around the programme. We have also streamlined record-keeping and enrolment procedures, our financial reporting is much improved and is

enabling us to forecast more accurately and we will be implementing a new evaluation framework at the start of the next academic year. Some of these improvements, such as the installation and use of MyMusicStaff to manage our student attendance and timetable, made transition to an online programme in April much more straightforward.

We have not made progress as quickly as we would have hoped in terms of monitoring and evaluation this year. This was partly because there were more immediate priorities in our consolidation plan and partly because we lacked the in-house resources to develop our evaluation work further. We are very pleased that work on our evaluation and learning programme is now moving forward thanks to dedicated funding secured. This grant will go towards work with Sound Connections, who provide consultancy on evaluation and impact assessment for music organisations, as well as a part-time



Learning and Evaluation Manager post.

This post has been filled and the new team member will join us on the 8th September 2020.

Despite the cancellation of our April concert and the impact of Covid-19 on funders, it has been a reasonable year for fundraising performance, with £437k raised this financial year, compared with £325k for the complete 2018-19 financial year. However, £67,000 of this was designated for consolidation activities and so was not available to support general running costs. As a young organisation with limited reserves it is essential that we manage our spending carefully, to ensure the organisation is stable going forwards. This is particularly important given the economic uncertainty caused by the impact of the pandemic.

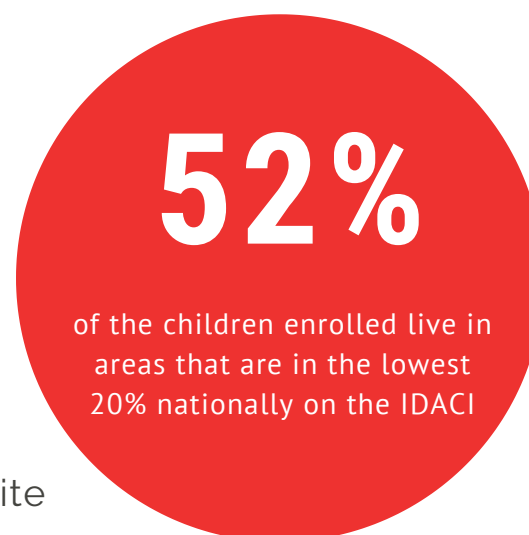
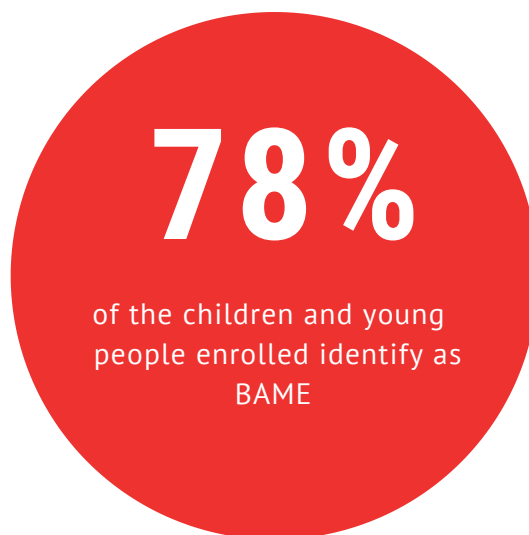
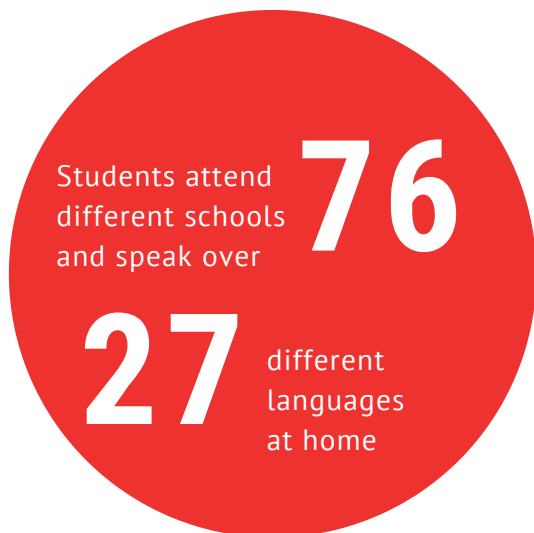
## Diversity and Inclusion

In July we were thrilled to be accepted into the first cohort of I'M IN, the tool designed to help music organisations build a diversity and inclusion strategy. Working through the toolkit we identified our strengths and weaknesses in relation to diversity, submitting our answers and accompanying evidence for review. The I'M IN diversity and inclusion specialists then analysed our responses and created a report for the charity, which provoked discussion and helped us to identify solutions with the ultimate goal of helping build a more inclusive culture at Nucleo. We look forward to implementing the recommendations and ensuring that going forwards diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our organisation.



# ACCESS AND INCLUSION

During the period of reporting:  
Based on English Indices of Deprivation 2019

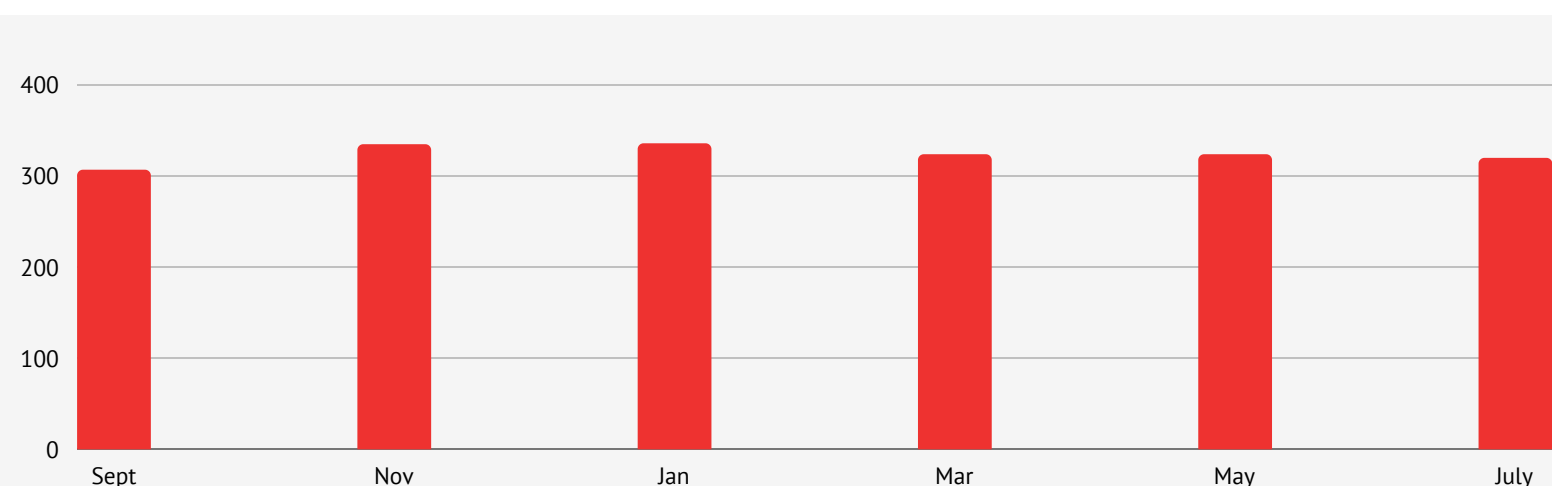


## TRAVELLER PROGRAMME

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

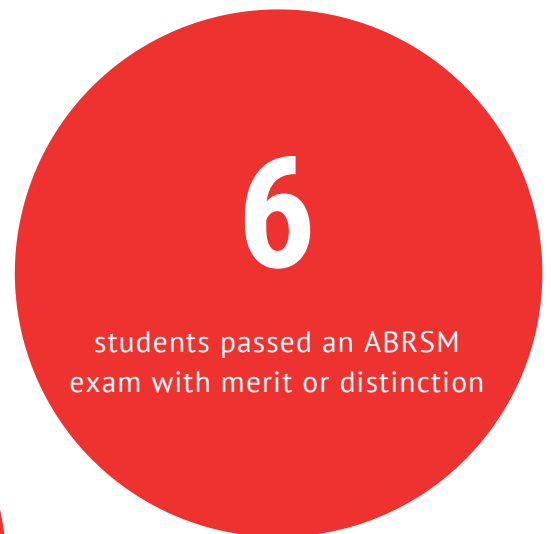
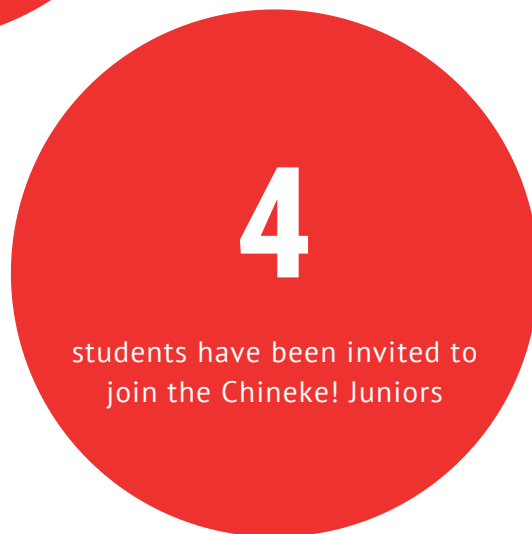
## ENROLMENT FOR THE YEAR

In 2019 enrolment increased from 306 to an average of 323 students.



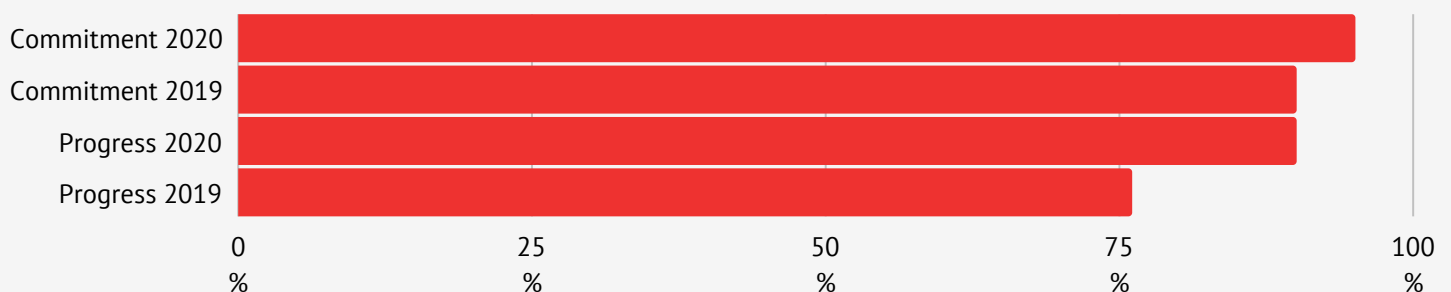
# MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

During the period of reporting:



## ASSESSMENT OF MUSICAL PROGRESS

Teacher assessment of students aged 7+, based on progress over the academic year. Showing improvement on previous year.





## PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

*Our key objectives for the future are:*

- To establish an inclusive culture and continue developing more inclusive practices
  - To ensure that diversity is a core value throughout the organisation
  - To develop communications and continue building our reputation as a leader in our field
  - 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 secure premises that are suitable for our growing programme in terms of both facilities and location
  - To consider growth beyond the current capacity of our teaching site and teaching team
  - 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.