



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Trustees' Annual Report for the period: From 2nd Jan 2023 – To 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2024

**Charity name: MERYC-England**

**Charity registration number: 1169504**

### Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The objectives of the charity are to advance the musical education of all children in England aged 0 – 5 years.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	<p>The three key areas of activity focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Holding in person and online conferences and seminars</li><li>2. Support for training in early childhood music education (ECME)</li><li>3. Representation and communication</li></ol> <p><b>Activities 2023-24</b></p> <p><b>1. Conferences and seminars:</b></p> <p>The organisation has organised and hosted three online seminars this year that focussed on research and practice in early childhood music education. This year's theme was 'Overcoming Challenges: Finding Solutions', fulfilling the object of promoting the importance to young lives and families of research informed practice and research founded on quality music making with young children.</p> <p>The online nature of these events ensures that we have practitioners and researchers attending from across England, the UK and occasionally from Europe/other international locations. This ensures the ongoing broad reach and impact of the charity and its work.</p> <p>The year's seminars were led by researchers in the field and explored the role of the visiting musician in early childhood settings, young children's musical play in the outdoors and a posthuman perspective on early childhood music education, 'From Mushrooms to Musical Play' led by Trustee, Dr Jessica Pitt.</p> <p>These events were well attended and although as in the previous year, trustees agreed to maintain the costs to participants of our activities at a</p>

		<p>modest level so as to be affordable for early years music education practitioners, these events did generate a small amount of income for the charity that will enable us to continue to offer grants etc to individuals and projects in the field.</p> <p>In response to feedback on in person events hosted by the charity in 2022, trustees have been working over the past year to plan a one day in person conference in collaboration with the International Centre for Music Studies at Newcastle University. The conference title is 'Early Childhood Music in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Exploring Possibilities in a Changing World. This will take place in November 2024. A call for papers resulted in a high volume of abstracts and proposals and as a result, the conference programme is vibrant and varied. We expect to welcome around 50-60 delegates to participate in varied presentations on academic research in the field, practical music making workshops and poster discussions of research and practice in early childhood music education. Speakers range from highly regarded and well-known academic figures with the ECME field to early career researchers, reflecting the aim of the charity to support both existing/ongoing and emerging research and practice.</p> <p>As in previous years, the design and delivery of opportunities for ECME practitioners and researchers to engage in person are intended both to further the charities objectives while also encouraging participation in the additional ongoing online activity offered by the charity.</p> <p><b>2. Training</b></p> <p>2023-24 is the sixth year of operation for the Certificate in Music Education, a flexible, part-time, distance-learning qualification in early childhood music. This is a recognised National Qualification which was initiated by MERYC England in partnership with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in 2017. The CME trains practitioners in the ECME field to level 4 standard. It was initially set up to fulfil two objects, namely:</p> <p><i>-attempting to increase the quantity and quality of research that will inform early childhood musical experience by supporting research initiatives of all kinds.</i></p> <p><i>- attempting to raise the quality of practice in early childhood music by encouraging evidence-based practice, critical reflection and the adoption of principles of social justice.</i></p>
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	<p>The day to day running of the certificate course runs independently of MERYC England, through the Centre for Research in Early Childhood being accountable to Trinity College, London. The course is co-directed by Jane Parker, a former honorary MERYC England Trustee and current MERYC England Trustee Margareta Burrell works on this course as a mentor to students, thus retaining the strong links between this initiative and MERYC England.</p> <p><b>3. Representation and communication</b></p> <p>In late 2023 the charity put out an advert via our website and social media channels to recruit new Trustees. It was agreed at 2023 Board meetings that the addition of four new Trustees would be ideal in order to ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adequate number of trustees to carry out the work of the charity, including but not limited to, conference and seminar planning, social media content and communications, assisting with the website and general administration of the charity.</li> <li>• To ensure that the Board membership reflects a broader representation of English regions. The new trustees are based in both southern and northern England which provides a better balance with a view to planning in person events that are not limited to the south or midlands as has been typical in past years.</li> <li>• Adequate numbers of Trustees to reflect a diverse mix of practice, research and those who have a great deal of longer-term experience in the field along with those in an earlier stage of their ECME career in research/practice.</li> </ul> <p>Through a rigorous application and interview process overseen by the long-standing Board and current Chair, four new trustees were appointed on a six-month trial basis from January (officially all accepting their positions in June 24. Their involvement from Jan 24 onwards will be reported on in full in the next reporting period).</p> <p>All MERYC England trustees are affiliated within a range of music education organisations or work as advisors to such organisations as Music HE, Youth Music, Sound Sense and have been responsible for research papers, presentations and books and publications on music learning. The CIO itself has a corporate membership of the Music Education Council (MEC). Four current Board members are full time academics working in Higher Education teaching and research in</p>
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	<p>institutions based in London (RCM), Manchester (University of Manchester), Birmingham (CREC/Birmingham City University, and Newcastle University.</p> <p>Honorary Trustee Jane Parker stood down from her role within the charity in Autumn 2023 due to a heavy workload of other commitments. We thank Jane for her contribution and we maintain links with her and with the CME course that she leads through current Trustee and CME mentor, Margareta Burrell.</p> <p>In the year 2023-24, we have further developed the MERYC England website, in line with our communications strategy, with the aim of making our objects aims and activities clearer and more accessible. In addition, this sets out our links with other organisations and achievements of practitioners and researchers as presented at local, national, and European contexts. All Trustees have been shown how to amend and add website content, meaning we have a greater variety of information available to users which is refreshed frequently.</p> <p>All seminars and training or discussion opportunities are promoted through Facebook, and X as well as the website and CREC and word of mouth. Work in the 24-25 period will include developing a presence on Instagram for the charity led by new trustees.</p> <p><b>PhD student:</b>  Maria Sanchez continues her LAHP funded Doctoral study on cultural citizenship towards cultural engagement with the support of MERYC England. This project continues to be supervised by charity trustee and lecturer Dr Jessica Pitt at the Royal College of Music (RCM) along with Dr Mary Stakelum (RCM). Ex-MERYC England Chair, Dr Alison Street stood down as co-supervisor this year and DR Julia Partington (Newcastle University Senior Lecturer in Music and MERYC England Chair) has taken on the role on behalf of MERYC England. As previously reported, this research study is proving to be instrumental in supporting a range of administrative tasks in relation to our charity activities, including compiling research blogs, and researching links between theory and practice as catalogued in the archival evidence from the last 20 years of both MERYC England's and EuNet MERYC's activities. This research will feed into trustees' objectives for the next two years and the student will present her work so far at the 2024 conference to both trustees and delegates.</p> <p>This doctoral study aims to strengthen MERYC England's position and increase understanding of</p>
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		its contribution to the field of early childhood music in England. Furthermore, the establishment of a collaboration with Royal College of Music is proving to be mutually beneficial for both organisations. As reported previously, it was envisaged that the collaboration demonstrates the ways that the contemporary conservatoire reaches beyond its traditional audience to be relevant to wider society. For MERYC England this partnership offers the organisation a platform for developing connections into the music and music education sectors which will raise the profile of early childhood as an important developmental stage deserving of quality musical experiences.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	All trustees familiarise themselves with the 'Essential Trustee' national guidance, have reviewed the constitution of the CIO and regularly explore in our meetings the applicability of principles related to good governance, as defined in the CGC.

#### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	<p>One of our key objects is '<i>promoting the integration of research, theory and practice by organising and funding meetings for that purpose</i>'. This year, as with the past two years, we have continued to prioritise holding online seminars and planning the conference at a modest fee for participants, rather than issue multiple grants for practitioners.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we offered three bursaries of £350 in 2023 to ECME researchers and practitioners who wished to attend the MERYC EuNet conference in Barcelona in July 2023 and received a number of applications, which were reviewed and appraised by trustees. Two applications were selected but due to unforeseen personal extenuating circumstances, only one of the successful applicants received the money and attended the conference, while the other returned their funding to the charity. The successful applicant who was able to attend the conference created a blog post for our website about her conference experience for the benefit of those who were unable to attend and this can be located here:  <a href="https://www.merycengland.co.uk/files/ugd/213ace_bbb52c802acc4c0cad60370e25c8f864.pdf">https://www.merycengland.co.uk/files/ugd/213ace_bbb52c802acc4c0cad60370e25c8f864.pdf</a></p>
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	The charity aims to hold a music education conference biennially, in alternate years to MERYC EuNet. This regular conference acts both as a means to maintain professional connectedness and as a way of building revenue for the charity. As noted above, we plan to host an in-person conference in Newcastle in November 2024.

		The ongoing seminar series continues into 2024-25 with the overall theme to be decided following the November 24 conference.
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	All MERYC England Trustees volunteer their time and energies. Any expenses planned for activities, such as compiling material for the website or organising and attending conferences, are agreed in advance and set to be in proportion to the task. Financial management is under regular review at each Board meeting. Trustees may co-opt participants to share the load as agreed in advance by the Board.
Other		

## Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>The key achievements this year have been:</p> <p><b>Conferencing/seminars</b>  The 2023 'Overcoming Challenges' seminar series attracted music and early childhood practitioners and researchers who were keen both to share their ideas and practice and to ask and explore questions relevant to the ECME context as a collective community.</p> <p>The seminar series aims to support freelance music practitioners and researchers in the field bringing them together through regular events where both groups are free to contribute and share their work, their ideas and experiences. Another year of this approach has shown an emerging network of regular attendees from across England and further afield, engaging with the work of the charity and with each other as a network of professional from across England. This continues to be a particular strength of this online meeting approach.</p> <p>Online seminars were once again facilitated by the charity trustees who gave their time and expertise to host each one, to organise the discussions and ensure an inclusive environment. To this end the Board set up ground rules for online activities to safeguard participants and facilitators.</p> <p><b>Training</b>  Although not directly responsible for the Certificate course, Trustees remain supportive and as an advisory body should it be needed. The involvement of a charity trustee, Margareta Burrell as a course mentor enables regular reporting to</p>

		<p>trustees on the progress and development of the course at board meetings.</p> <p><b>Representation and communication</b> Individual trustees continued to represent the charity through different platforms this year, particularly through Music Education Council (MEC), Sound Sense, plus Music HE.</p>
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#### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	<p>In 2021 we set our objective to become more accessible to a wider audience and this work has continued to be a large part of our work in 2023-24. Continuing to develop our website as a tool to promote the work of the organisation, and to provide useful links to those working in the ECME sector involved collaborative planning and ongoing work to keep the content up to date and engaging for users, while also promoting the events, grants, and resources we have to offer.</p>
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	<p>Our fundraising objectives continued to be deliberately modest in 2023-24, as we prioritised pricing our seminar programme at competitive prices in the understanding that many similar organisations were offering courses in the sector free of charge, or at a very low cost.</p> <p>Our priority was to continue to provide an attractive relevant and affordable forum for practitioners and researchers to develop their practice, research and professional networks. Nevertheless, we succeeded in more than covering costs and raised a total of £612.88 through seminars. This has enabled us to maintain reasonable reserves while also offering grants as outlined above.</p> <p>The numbers of participants in these activities and who attended multiple sessions in the period under review gives the charity confidence that the public service we are providing has been welcomed within the sector.</p>
Investment performance against objectives		N/A
Other		

## Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	At the end of this period the Charity's bank account with the Co-operative Bank showed a balance of £7314.25
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	The policy to hold a reserve is under continuous review by the Board of Trustees We keep this reserve to indicate prudent financial management against risk of activities failing to meet costs, and to ensure there is a balance in the account, when applying for grants.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	£2000
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	N/A
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	N/A

### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	The principal source of revenue is from CPD seminar fees and biannual conference delegate fees.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	N/A
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	The principal risks are the capacity of individual trustees to continue the activities that generate funds. All are totally committed to the purposes and aims and the objectives. All are volunteers.
Other		N/A

## Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document ( <a href="#">trust deed</a> , <a href="#">royal charter</a> )	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g <a href="#">unincorporated association</a> , <a href="#">CIO</a> )	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation



Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are representative of a range of practice and from different regions in England. A balance is maintained between researchers and practitioners, to ensure the charity's objectives are met, according to the constitution document.
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### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	All trustees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Constitution, with the Charity Commission guidelines for good governance and with the principles of the CGC. Principles are reviewed regularly in the light of current projects and activities. All trustees have been DBS checked. MERYC England adheres to the policies held by CREC in safeguarding and in equality, diversity and inclusion. In the year 2021-22 we established agreed guidelines for online video conferencing and initiated a privacy statement.
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	There are currently ten MERYC England trustees following the stepping down of Jane Parker and the recruitment of four new trustees in late 2023 as outlined above. All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity, with expenses agreed in advance where applicable, eg for specific tasks relating to conference and seminar administration and facilitation. They regularly represent MERYC England on a range of bodies, e.g. Youth Music, Music Mark and Music Education Council.
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	Our website and social media accounts connect with regional and local music education networks across England and also with European and the international music education network, ISME.
Other		

### Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	MERYC-England
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1169504
Charity's principal address	Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) St Thomas Children's Centre, Bell Barn Road, Attwood Green, Birmingham, West Midlands, B15 2AF Telephone: +44(0)121 464 0020

## Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Julia Partington	Chair	Began as Trustee in June 2022, took over as Chair, September 2022 - present	
2	Dr Ryan Humphrey	Trustee		
3	Margareta Burrell	Trustee		
4	Prof Chris Pascal	Trustee Representing Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)		
5	Dr Jessica Pitt	Trustee		
6	Barbara Cavanagh,	Treasurer		
7	Stephen Grocott	Trustee		
8	Vanessa Stansall	Trustee		
9	Danielle Ballantine-Drake	Trustee		
10	Carol Bowden	Trustee		
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## Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
N/A		

## Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year	
N/A		


### **Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others**

Description of the assets held in this capacity	N/A
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	N/A
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	N/A

### **Additional information (optional)**

#### **Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)**

<b>Type of adviser</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>

#### **Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)**

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### **Exemptions from disclosure**

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

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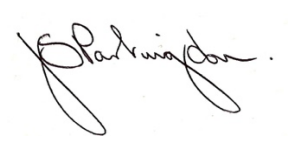
### **Other optional information**

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### **Declarations**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

<b>Signature(s)</b>		B.Cavanagh
<b>Full name(s)</b>	Dr Julia Partington	Barbara Cavanagh
<b>Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)</b>	Chair of Trustees, MERYC England	Trustee and treasurer, MERYC England
<b>Date</b>	25/10/24	