

# THE **S**TRINGCREDIBLES

PROJECT  
REPORT

**S**TRINGCREDIBLE  
APPRENTICES  
BIRMINGHAM  
2025



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**Services**  
**For Education**

SUPPORTED BY

**Albert and Eugenie  
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and kind donations

# THE PROJECT

Our **Stringcredible Apprentices** programme has been running since 2014 in partnership with Birmingham Music Service, the regional Music Education Hub led by **Services for Education (SFE)**. It is designed to support young musicians and develop their performance skills. It allows for the development of young string players in inspirational roles, widens the reach of our performance methodologies programme, creates diverse role models in a very diverse city and supports the work of an excellent music hub.

The Apprentices programme offers:

- A first point of access for primary school children to watch live string performance, and to explore opportunities to take up instrumental learning
- A chance to young musicians to upskill and perform as a quartet, acting as inspirational role models for their younger peers
- Professional development opportunities for music teachers
- Cascading of learning from The Stringcredibles to music teachers and then to the pupils they teach
- Support for the regional Music Education Hub (Birmingham Music Service) in recruiting more young musicians and developing the skillset of existing young performers.

## APPRENTICES 2025

Our Stringcredible Apprentices programme 2025 was a great success.

In the autumn term, we took on a new cohort of learners in partnership with the Birmingham Music Service at SFE.

Throughout the term we worked with:

**8 young string quartet players** including one student from the Shireland CBSO Academy

**4 music teachers**

**3 music students from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire**

As introduced last year, we had students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire shadowing the project.

The teachers, students and young musicians came to see The Stringcredibles perform in a primary school, then learned how to perform the show as brand new quartets. The Stringcredibles trained the quartet of teachers, and then mentored the teachers as they trained up the quartets of young musicians. The students observed all activity and supported in the Apprentices coaching sessions.

Our 8 Apprentices were a diverse cohort of string players, selected by Sally Hobbs (Head of Strings at SFE) as being musicians of promise, who would benefit most from the experience. The project helped them to really hone their performance and public speaking skills, and use these to inspire other children to engage with music.



# ACTIVITY

The young musicians, students and music teachers took part in a training programme delivered by The Stringcredibles, and went on to perform a series of interactive shows in primary schools around Birmingham.

## SCHEDULE

// September 2025

- Demonstration performance by The Stringcredibles in a primary school
- Observation by music teachers, students and apprentices
- Training day at Services for Education

// October 2025

- Coaching of music teacher quartet
- Performances in primary schools by music teachers
- Rehearsals for young apprentice quartets
- Mentoring of music teachers and coaching support from The Stringcredibles

// November 2025

- Dress rehearsals for young apprentices
- Performances by young apprentice quartets in primary schools

The activity was supported by a selection of videos on our own digital platform, exploring all elements of our methodology, Pitch Pace Perform.

## SCHOOLS

We delivered performances in the following primary schools. Those with stars have since increased their engagement with Birmingham Music Service;

### The Stringcredibles

Hillstone Primary School, Birmingham

### Music Teacher Quartet

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sutton Coldfield  
Whitehouse Common Primary School, Sutton Coldfield

### Apprentice Quartets

Kings Heath Primary School, Birmingham  
Grendon Primary School, Birmingham\*  
Stirchley Primary School, Birmingham  
Cotteridge Primary School, Birmingham\*



# ACHIEVEMENTS

This year's programme was extremely rewarding. Perhaps more than ever before the **4 music teachers** were really invested in the performances of the **8 young musicians** (and also encouraged us to include 'Golden' which turned out to be a big hit with the children), the **3 RBC students** gave really helpful feedback at the dress rehearsal and the **8 apprentices** engaged wonderfully as part of their small ensembles. This year due to great commitment from the teacher quartet we were able to play along with the apprentices much more during early rehearsals to help with counting and ensemble skills. In addition to this the communication and friendships within the quartets evolved well so that the apprentices came to support each other in a natural way during the performances, with both their playing and their speaking.

This year we are proud to have reached:

**7 primary schools**

**1,760 primary school pupils aged 4-11**

**1000+ additional instrumental learners**



The project has had positive impacts on;

- **Primary school children** and their engagement with music
- **Primary school staff** and their experience of music in a school setting
- **Young musicians**, and their performance skills
- **Music teachers** and their ability to reach more schools through delivering ensemble performances
- **Young instrumental learners** taught by the music teacher quartet
- **Music Education Hub staff**, and their strategic approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and widening participation
- **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Students** and their confidence in delivering coaching and outreach work

## FEEDBACK //

### Primary Schools

100% of teachers surveyed agreed:

- the school **enjoyed the performance**
- the session was **well pitched for children**
- the session was **effective as a learning activity**
  - the musicians **performed well**
  - the session was **fun**

We also had a primary school parent get in touch after one of the apprentice shows to ask whether they could book them for another school performance!



## Primary Schools continued

*"The teenagers performing were really inspirational for our children. One boy next to me said 'when I grow up I want to be just like them!'"*

Cotteridge Primary School

*"Everyone loved it! The children particularly enjoyed the participation element and how the performance was broken down. Every child I asked thought it was fun as well. The Spaghetti Strings delivered the performance with confidence showcasing such talent to a hall of 190 people - not an easy feat! The staff loved it equally. A great way to start our Friday. Thank you."*

Stirchley Primary School

*"Please pass on a huge thank you, again, to the students in the quartet, they were amazing and also to the staff present supporting them - it was a pleasure to see the relationship between them and their students and the obvious pride they had in their abilities and performance."*

Kings Heath Primary School

*"We loved the musical performance, it allowed the children to see what they could lead up to when learning to play. It was engaging, enthusiastic and brilliant!"*

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Apprentices

The young apprentices reported improvements in their skillset as a result of taking part in the project, with the most marked areas of improvement being:

- **Counting** and knowing all four individual parts
- **Confidence** in playing and speaking
- **Communication** with peers and audiences



This year our Apprentices' highlights were:

*"I really liked playing in front of the children. They are much less judgemental than adults!"*

*"It was rewarding to see how much they enjoyed and made me enjoy playing more."*

*"I also love working in a team with people my own age, getting to know and inspiring each other."*

And feedback from from a parent:

*"It was so great today! I've filled in the questionnaire- possibly slightly biased but who cares! Thanks for giving [her] such a brilliant opportunity. She is buzzing about it this evening!"*

## Music Teachers

The 4 teachers - Fiddlesticks! - were more consistently involved than in previous iterations. They currently teach in some of the schools that were visited this year and staff and children were really excited to see them.

*"Thinking about moderating how I speak to younger musicians... thinking how you can give plenty of encouragement is important, whilst at the same time trying to improve their performances."*

*"It has been my most enjoyable aspect of working at the music service. It is great that I am able to pass on my experience as a performer to younger musicians."*

*"I loved seeing how the children reacted — especially when they enjoyed the concert and sang along to their favourite song. I also enjoyed watching the apprentices improve and become braver."*

*"I feel inspired by what you [the Stringcredibles] do to promote string quartet playing, and I really love your style."*

*"I think the model of the music service teachers training the apprentice quartets alongside the Stringcredibles members works very well."*

*"It will help me see my teaching in a new way — as a kind of whole-person performance. I'll be more aware of my speaking style, the words I choose, my body language, and how pupils respond. It also inspires me to broaden the mindset of older pupils, especially those in secondary school."*



One of our 2019 Apprentices is now teaching a primary class at Grendon Primary School - here she is with Bryony who coached her 6 years ago!