



Special Friends Club is a charity operating throughout the City of Bristol and South Gloucestershire, run by parent volunteers. They are unique in that they provide support for families of children with special needs by organising a wide range of activities that can be shared and enjoyed by the whole family. The club has a membership of 145 families with over 280 children whose ages range from 3-18 years. The children all have diagnosed disabilities inhibiting their opportunities to access mainstream activities and venues. The children face a broad range of barriers including; Profound and Multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), Cerebral Palsy, physical disabilities, Autism, Downs Syndrome and other genetic conditions.

St George's Bristol was delighted to welcome a group from the Special Friends Club to the Bristol Ensemble's Children's Christmas Carnival on Sunday 20 December 2015. Following the success of this visit, we contacted the group to suggest establishing a partnership between the two organisations and were extremely pleased to receive the following response:

*"All the children really enjoyed the Children's Christmas Carnival. The feedback was all positive. They said they would really like St George's to be a regular event, so it was wonderful to receive your email offering us future shows. We would very much like to work with you towards this."*

*Special Friends Trustee, Sophie Axford – a recent Halifax Giving Extra Award winner, in recognition of her amazing contribution to the local community.*



Each season we stage a series of MiniBeats Concerts for children aged 3 – 8. Each show is designed to introduce participants to a section of the Orchestra (Wind, Brass, Strings and Percussion), Voice or Piano and includes the opportunity for audience members to get up close and personal with the musicians and even have a go on the instruments they have listened to. On April 10 2016, St George's will be extending the MiniBeats offer, to include a bespoke relaxed performance especially for Special Friends Club. We hope this will be the start of a lasting relationship with Special Friends Club and are really looking forward to sharing our beautiful venue with them again.