



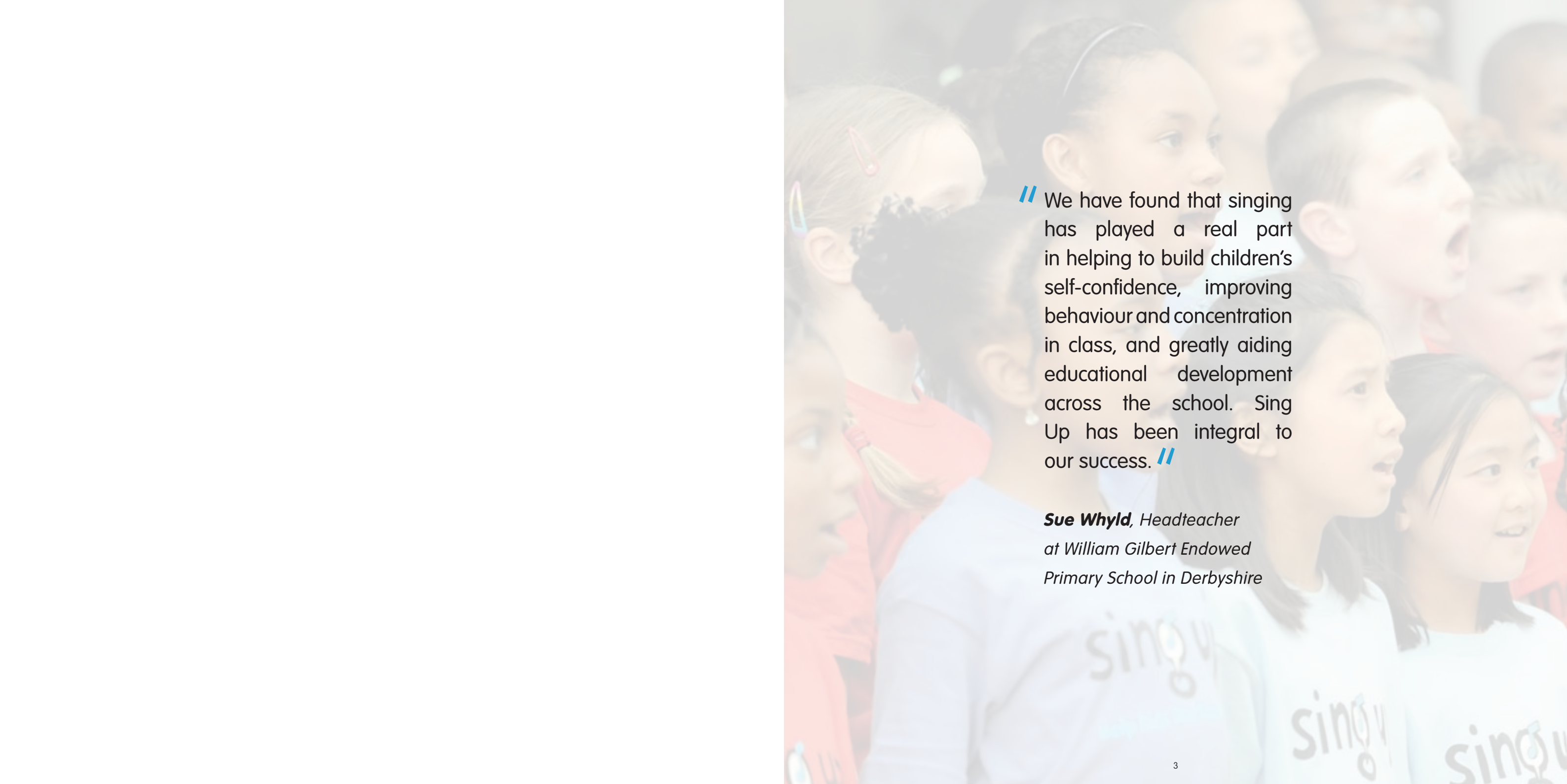
# Sing Up Case Studies

The power of singing in schools

**sing up**

Help kids find their voice

Sing Up, the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government.



// We have found that singing has played a real part in helping to build children's self-confidence, improving behaviour and concentration in class, and greatly aiding educational development across the school. Sing Up has been integral to our success. //

**Sue Whyld**, Headteacher  
at William Gilbert Endowed  
Primary School in Derbyshire

# Howard Goodall, National Singing Ambassador



In my job as a composer and broadcaster I am reminded daily of the power of music; the way it can transform lives, lift spirits and bring people together. As the National Singing Ambassador I also see how music – and more specifically singing – can help with academic learning, building confidence and a sense of community.

Over the past three years I have been fortunate to witness the effect Sing Up has had on the pupils, staff and parents of primary schools across England. As a programme it has been extremely successful – indeed it has attracted much attention both in the UK and overseas.

There are lots of statistics and academic reports which show what we have achieved, but this publication has been written to tell of some of the real life stories of how singing is transforming individual schools.

From using singing in lessons on the Vikings, to encouraging children to be singing leaders, classes across the country are full of song and beyond the

classroom whole communities are coming together thanks to the way in which schools are using their vocal skills to reach out and include everyone. With the help of teachers, Headteachers, parents, musicians and music organisations working in schools and the pupils themselves, these pages can remind us all why music, particularly singing, has such an important role to play in school life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Howard Goodall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Howard Goodall, National Singing Ambassador  
July 2010

## Introduction

**S**inging can improve learning, confidence, health and social development. It has the power to change lives and help build stronger communities. And importantly, it has the power to improve schools.

Here are 14 case studies from primary-age educational settings across England who have used their relationship with Sing Up to ensure that singing unites the school, aids learning, develops young leadership, raises standards, and much more. Most have received Sing Up Awards, and all show how any primary school could, and should, place singing at the heart of school life.

Sing Up is a national programme that aims to ensure all primary-aged children are able to access high quality singing activities every day. It was launched in November 2007 as part of a Government commitment to raise the standard of music education, and supports primary schools and their workforces to develop singing activity.

The programme aims to engage every primary school in England by 2011, and the vast majority of primary schools

have already signed up, with an average of nearly 3 teachers registered per school. Research by the Institute of Education finds that children in Sing Up schools are between 18 months and 2 years further advanced in their singing competency than those in schools who haven't engaged with Sing Up.

The programme has a number of strands working to promote singing nationally. A termly **magazine** provides songs, advice and inspiring singing stories and the Sing Up **online resource** has over 400 songs and warm-ups available for users. The **Sing Up Awards** help schools to celebrate and promote the value of singing as an important part of each day.

Through strong networks and partnerships, Sing Up aims to inspire in every region across the country. Over 45,000 people have improved their singing leadership through Sing Up's **training and professional development** activities and Sing Up Funded Programmes have helped over 100,000 children find their voice through **projects and performances**.

Find out more and register at [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org).

# Hendal Primary School



## Brave hearts

Looking at the statistics, Hendal Primary may appear to be an average school. What is clearly exceptional, however, is the bravery and dedication to singing that their teachers have displayed – given that none of them is a music specialist. “We have no music qualifications between us,” their Awards Champion pointed out, “but we have a belief that singing is good for the soul, the heart, your health ... [it] can stir parts of you that no other thing can reach”.

## How they do it

Hendal staff use singing in all areas of the curriculum, and are constantly looking for new ways to integrate it.

- A class assembly about the Gruffalo had Year 1 and 2 children singing the *Gruffalo Song*, “with actions and lots of enthusiasm”. This was led by a recent NQT

- Another recent NQT used a CD and song-sheet called *Viking Rock* to enhance Year 4’s learning about the history topic of the Vikings. As well as performing the song to the whole school, their learning about the subject was enhanced, too, with teachers reporting that they retained more information through singing

- The staff involve singing in different aspects of the curriculum, including science, French and maths. All the children in the school sing a lot in the classroom; singing is not restricted to music lessons.

## Getting it together

Hendal finds assemblies a very useful way of both using and encouraging singing, and the weekly singing assembly involves the whole school. The songs range widely because of the age range. They include traditional songs for St George’s Day, such as *Green grow the rushes, oh* and *The tale of Sir Eglamore and the dragon*; action songs from the Sing for Pleasure repertoire; and songs from Sing Up’s Song Bank, such as *Building, Refuge* and *No wars will stop us singing*.

## Signs of greatness

Hendal has a tradition of singing and signing. The school gives an annual outdoor Christmas Carol Concert where they sing and sign *Silent Night*, with

## // Singing gives a sense of community //

parents, grandparents and friends joining in. This year, the school’s Year 1 teacher has demonstrated her pupils’ confidence by rehearsing them to sing and sign *Five Little Ducks* in an assembly.

Ofsted noted that “the quality of singing throughout the school is impressive ... Singing is seen by all staff as important to the development of the whole child. The school has successfully explored how singing can contribute to and support other subjects”. Staff at Hendal couldn’t agree more, Hendal’s Sing Up Awards Champion said: **“We really do try to be ambassadors for singing, because we think it is something which promotes such positive feelings, skills, and gives a sense of community.”** Hendal is living proof of that.

### Hendal Primary School

Location: Wakefield, Yorkshire

Number of pupils: 307

Age of pupils: 3-11

Free school meals: “higher than average”

Ofsted says: “Good” – 2007

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

# Spaldwick Community Primary School

**Everybody sings every day at Spaldwick.** The school considers itself a beacon of singing in Cambridgeshire, and has reached the point where even when the Music Co-ordinator is away, there are plenty of people – staff and pupils – who have the confidence to lead singing activities.

## Daily bread

Each class is expected to sing every day during the register, lesson changes, cross-curricular areas, topic songs, game songs, action songs, and just for fun. Singing is led by the class teacher and teaching assistants, but there is also a Sound Squad, made up of children within each class who are tasked with keeping their class singing.

A record of all singing used to be kept in the Sound Diary in order to monitor activity – this has now been changed into a Sound Wall that children can write on. Music Co-ordinator Kirsty Body explains, “This includes a practice chart for instrumentalists, the assembly song



record, a record of performances, ideas for the Sound Squad, Song Walls and suggestions for new songs.” The school has also set up a choir, which adults from the school and the village have joined. This crosses the boundaries of age and helps local people to develop a sense of belonging to the community.

## Leading the way

Musical leadership is a big theme in the school, as it develops people’s confidence in singing. Not only have the majority of teachers led songs in class assemblies in front of an audience of parents, but also **children have been “literally queuing up to take a turn at being the leader”**. Kirsty Body recalls that “the Year 5 class were doing some scat singing and really showed their confidence in improvising to a twelve-bar blues backing track, with the rest of the class singing back”. The Sound Squad is a source of new ideas to encourage everyone to develop their singing: an interclass song competition, a video to showcase singing and special days to get families singing.

## Second nature

The school has a proportion of children with special needs or disabilities, and this number is increasing because of parental preference for the school. One school Governor commented that “it is clear that school productions,

performances and assemblies are inclusive activities, because singing is”. She also pointed out that the younger pupils learn singing and songs from the older classes: “it was clear that they looked up to them as role models and experts in singing. It is second nature to the children at Spaldwick to enjoy singing.”

## // It is second nature to enjoy singing //

The children also combine singing with their instrumental work, including Djembe drumming, tin whistle, keyboard and – the current favourite – ocarina. This is part of their Wider Opportunities work. The school’s saxophone sextet, “Saxophonic” amazed the adjudicators at the Music for Youth regional festival by playing and singing *Hey Mr Miller* in three parts.

### Spaldwick Community Primary School

Location: Spaldwick, Cambridgeshire

Number of pupils: 170

Age of pupils: 4-11

Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities: “a higher than average proportion ... and rising”

Ofsted says: “Outstanding” – 2009

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

Calmer  
and more  
focused

# St Michael's First School



- There is a song of the week as well as word of the week and number of the week
- Maintaining the enthusiasm for singing by never missing an opportunity to sing
- **Using singing and movement to help kinaesthetic learners – an approach that particularly helps the younger boys.**

Songs such as *The hokey cokey*, *Odd and even rap* and the *Vowel rap* teach simple concepts such as left and right, odd and even numbers and letters. The Music Co-ordinator says, "When you see this happening, you as a teacher know that real learning has taken place through music as they have internalised and gained knowledge from these simple but effective raps".

## Subjects matter

Incorporating singing into the daily work of each class has been an important development. There have been a range of initiatives:

- Year 3 pupils learn their number bonds, their times tables, the days of the week and the months of the year by singing them to different tunes

## Focusing the mind

Singing songs at various times during the day aids concentration and can signal a change of activity or be used as a warm-up to a lesson.

"To commence a learning activity with a singing session, settles the children immediately. They become focused, as the song will indicate what topic or

## // You know that real learning has taken place through music //

subject they will be learning," says their Year 2 class teacher. **Singing during lessons is also useful in calming pupils – particularly boys – and re-focusing them on the task in hand.**

But as well as giving the children a mental advantage, singing has a **positive impact on behaviour**. Singing is used while the pupils are lining up in the playground, which also involves parents or carers dropping off their children. This is seen as a way of building up a **positive and productive relationship with parents**, and allowing the parents to see their children in a different light.

Singing a song in the classroom as soon as they come in from the playground helps children to overcome any problems at playtime, "so there is less thought about becoming distracted or silly". Teachers have found that combining singing with signing "can be very powerful in focusing pupils and encouraging appropriate behaviour."

## Confidence building

St Michael's has found that singing activity can support the development of leadership skills in pupils. By placing a child at the front of the class to lead singing or rap, it is possible to raise that child's self-esteem and promote independence. The Headteacher, Mary Gale, commented that "you can find a child who would never have thought of putting their hand up at the beginning of the year, will be willing to come out and lead the singing at the front by the end of the school year."

**In 2010 Ofsted found that "Every opportunity is embraced to celebrate and enhance the pupils' musical experiences and development. The deputy Headteacher leads the school's singing work with an infectious enthusiasm that encourages pupils to sing confidently."**

### St Michael's First School

Location: Stone, near Stoke on Trent

Number of pupils: 358

Age of pupils: 3-9

Ofsted says: "Good" – 2010

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award



# St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Singing can be deployed as a key means of raising standards of literacy and social skills, as well as improving self-confidence. St Paul's is a larger than average school, and singing has an important part to play for the many children who have statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

## Raising the roof

Singing is embedded in all areas of learning and enhances and enriches the delivery of the curriculum. **It not only assists in developing literacy skills, but is valuable in promoting social skills and enhancing pupils' self-esteem, sense of well-being and enjoyment.** The school also plans singing into the school curriculum to augment different areas of learning such as Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE). Their Year 4 children particularly enjoy singing in French.

## Songs and sources

The children have enjoyed singing thematic songs from *The very fat crab*, an original songbook written by Portsmouth Music Service. Teachers draw on the Sing Up Song Bank to support their lessons. Staff use songs from the Song Bank to support thematic planning. For example, Year 2 included *My Bonnie lies over the ocean* as part of their topic about the sea.



## Health and well-being

**Children at St Paul's understand the health benefits of singing as an aerobic activity.** Teachers have noticed how increased singing throughout the school has raised the level of well-being

// Singing is our passion //

for children and staff and the sense of community both within and outside the school. For example, Thomas from Year 2 lacked confidence in class but, having enjoyed choir, has become far more confident and self-assured. Many children experience a significant boost to their

self-esteem through singing in school. A group of children visited the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth to sing with patients at Christmas. Teachers have been so enthused by the singing in the school that they have formed their own choir and performed at a public concert in the city.

## All together

Brenda Schouler, Headteacher at St Paul's, says that singing is "right at the heart of life" in the school. She adds, "We love singing as a school community, as part of our curriculum learning, our worship and of course, for fun. The children sing in choirs, there's singing on the playground, singing in lessons and singing all over the school – singing is our passion!"

### St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Location: Paulsgrove, Portsmouth

Number of pupils: 385

Age of pupils: 4-11

Ofsted says: "Good" – 2009

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

More: "The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, and the proportion of those with statements of Special Educational Needs is above average."

# William Gilbert Endowed Primary School



## Raising attainment

Two aspects of Every Child Matters that are particularly pertinent to the benefits of singing are for all pupils to "achieve and enjoy" and also to "make a positive contribution". Twelve children from across Year 5 and 6, who are currently on the SEN register, all play an active role in the school choir, community events and local cluster projects for choral singing.

Jayne Stevenson, the school's Acting Headteacher, says that "singing is fully inclusive ... pupils who are on the SEN register, or who have behavioural or concentration problems, respond well to being part of a group that enjoys making music together." She adds, "It is wonderful to see children, who may never be top of the class at literacy or numeracy, blossom as their confidence, through singing, flourishes."

Pupils on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register are among many specific groups that can benefit enormously from singing activities. At William Gilbert, the emphasis has been on building their self-confidence and linking singing to the Every Child Matters agenda.



## New ways of learning

**Learning through fun is another useful aspect of the school's singing work.** The children use song to learn Modern Foreign Languages. The children themselves acknowledge the benefits, as one Year 6 girl points out: "Singing for French keeps a tune in my head and it keeps going so I learn the French better."

On a recent visit to the school, Baz Chapman, the Programme Director for Sing Up, said that "the commitment to quality singing across the school is outstanding - from the enthusiasm of Key Stage 1 singing, to the pitch accuracy of all Key Stage 2 pupils, to the very high quality of the school choir". **Ofsted recognises the school's music as an important contributor to the school's overall achievement.** Its 2008 report read:

// Pupils' exceptionally good singing reflects their enjoyment of music and the performing arts in general. //

### William Gilbert Primary School

Location: Duffield, near Derby

Number of pupils: 270

Age of pupils: 3-11

Ofsted says: "Outstanding" – 2008

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

# Almondsbury CE Primary School



## Let 'em all come

This rural primary school has made singing accessible to a large number of its pupils, parents and wider community by setting up a number of different singing groups. These include the Sing Up Singers and Voices Xtreme, which involve 80 young singers, a third of the school population. There is a large proportion of boys in Voices Xtreme, which won a Bristol schools carol competition at Christmas in 2009. They regularly take part in local festivals and competitions.

Music Co-ordinator Ceri Dash also set up the Almondsbury Singers in 2009, a group made up of staff, ex-pupils, parents, grandparents, Governors and members of the local community. One member, an ex-pupil, says "It's just like one big singing family". Despite the fact that there is no audition for the group, they sing in four parts and have made their own CDs. Voices Xtreme sometimes sings with the Almondsbury Singers, which the children found "really cool". One said, "The grown-ups show us what we can be like when we're older. We can still sing. Singing is not just for children."

“ It's just like  
one big  
singing family ”

## Make 'em sing

However, having all these groups isn't enough for Ceri. "As music subject leader, I am concerned that not every child is being given the opportunity to sing," she says. The school has set itself the challenge to become a "singing school", with every child singing for at least five minutes a day. To do this the school:

- Has sent a letter to parents explaining the programme and supplying the Sing Up web address

- Choose a Song of the Week from the Song Bank, which is flagged up in the school newsletter and in the school hall
- Perform the Song of the Week with the whole school during assembly every Friday
- Set up a Lunchtime Karaoke Club in the hall, using songs from the Song Bank
- Set up a Sing Up Singers group after school once a week, open to any child of any age
- Created a Sing Up Stop in the playground where laminated song lyrics are hung on the wall for children to get together and sing during play times.

## Going further

Many parents are registered with Sing Up, and use the Song Bank regularly with their children. The children also perform in the community, including singing a specially composed song at the opening of the local village shop cooperative and giving an annual carol concert in the local church. Members of the community, including the Women's Institute and the builders who were working on the school building project, are invited to performances.

**"Singing is a cool thing to do at Almondsbury," says Ceri, "and we are very proud of our Sing Up Platinum Award."**



## A Different Kind of Choir

We meet on a Wednesday – a rowdy old bunch,  
The teenagers, teachers, the ladies who lunch,  
And give this whole 'choir' thing our very best shot,  
Most songs are a triumph! Some are – well – not...

From Broadway to Bethlehem, Pop through to Swing,  
There's nothing us plucky old bunch won't sing,  
Give us the music; we're done in a flash,  
(But it would all fall apart – without Mrs Dash!)

We're friendly enough, so if you're up for a song,  
It's Wednesdays, half seven, why not come along?  
Come and laugh at the flops, applaud the humdingers,  
It's all part and parcel – with the Almondsbury Singers!

Poem by **Ed Franklin** – an ex-pupil and member of the Almondsbury Singers

“ Opportunities to perform  
in the school choirs and  
orchestra .... greatly  
enrich pupils' learning. ”

**Ofsted report, 2009**

### Almondsbury Church of England Primary School

Location: Almondsbury, Gloucestershire

Number of pupils: 261

Age of pupils: 4-11

Ofsted says: "Good" – 2009

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

## The National Institute of Conductive Education



Singing can be used in highly specialised environments to create a range of benefits. The National Institute of Conductive Education (NICE) uses the methodology of Conductive Education, which was developed in Hungary in the 1940s. It aims to help children and adults with movement co-ordination difficulties to learn how to overcome problems with movement so they can lead more active and independent lives.

### Rhythm and structure

"We use singing throughout all our programmes," says Wendy Baker, the Headteacher who is also the Awards Champion. "It is already an integral part of Conductive Education, providing the rhythm and structure for movements, and **singing from an early age provides opportunities for speech development and learning of new concepts in a fun and enjoyable way.**"

Since gaining its Sing Up Gold Award, the Institute is now reaching out to work with other schools, encouraging the benefits of singing in the classroom. Wendy explains why: "We often find that children begin to sing before they can speak, and

sometimes children with very profound difficulties respond to music in a way they do not to other activities". She adds that **Sing Up has focused NICE's thinking and has enabled it to provide good examples for other schools of how singing can be incorporated into work with children with very complex needs.**

**"Singing from an early age provides opportunities for speech development and learning"**

### Child on the up

Parents have noticed a number of benefits for their children, including:

- Developing memory and understanding of concepts
- Developing speech and language
- Providing motivation and encouragement
- Developing confidence and self-esteem
- Helping groups to cohere
- Snapping children out of tantrums
- Making the children feel happy.

### Staff responses

Erzsi, the leader of the Early Years group at NICE, points out that "singing is a very powerful way of attaching meaning to an action. It activates children to

respond and take part in activities. Children later perform actions when hearing a song that they have heard or sung while previously carrying out an activity." Another staff member says that "children with profound speech and communication difficulties can enjoy singing by joining in with stamping their feet or clapping. Others took great pride in learning the words. All children and staff felt a great sense of achievement when we received our award."

**Wendy is full of praise for Sing Up's teacher training days, citing them as a source of "lots of excellent ideas that could be adapted for use with children in all sorts of settings."**

### The National Institute for Conductive Education

*Location:* Birmingham

*Number of pupils:* 17

*Age of pupils:* 3-11

*Ofsted says:* "providing a good quality education, with outstanding care and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" – 2007

*Sing Up Award:* Gold Award

*More:* This independent special school "works with children and adults with a range of problems affecting their mobility such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and strokes"

## Birmingham Children's Hospital



The team sees children who range from being in a coma to seeming quite well. "Some can vocalise and sing beautifully; others cannot vocalise at all. Some are unable to move, while others are running around the ward; some speak English, others do not," explains Rebecca. It is not only the children who enjoy the sessions: parents and grandparents have expressed their gratitude for what singing brings to their children.

**"Singing helps you feel better"**

### On the wards

The hospital environment throws up a number of challenges. Every aspect of hospital life takes precedence over an arts project, and the team never knows whom they are going to see on any given day. They also know little about the children they meet. Activities include leading singing games and adapting repertoire on the spot for whomever they find themselves singing with. The material has to be appropriate. "We learned quite quickly, to ensure a child could nod their head before singing 'nod your head, nod, nod ...'"

They have to enable participation for those who may or may not have ever done any singing before, and who

might not expect that they'd want to do any singing in those circumstances.

### The healing process

**Although the team is not aiming for clinical benefits, hospital staff continually give feedback on how singing helps them in their work.** A child may be better prepared for their treatment because they are calmer, or they may explore their emotions through the medium of singing. There are more concrete therapeutic results, too. After working with a child on the liver ward, one physiotherapist said, "You've got him moving his legs more than I've ever managed to." On the oncology ward, one six-year-old boy said to another, "You ought to do Singing Medicine. It helps you feel better." As staff have recognised the benefits, more space has been made for Ex Cathedra's activities.

### Ex Cathedra

*As well as running Singing Medicine in Birmingham and Oxford, Ex Cathedra have worked on many projects with Sing Up including training and Singing Playgrounds.*

*To date there have been:*

*5357 children singing/participants*

*20 singing leaders developed through Singing Medicine project*

*436 Young Singing Leaders developed through Singing Playgrounds project*

It is not only children in school who can benefit from singing – children in hospital can also gain a great deal. Singing Medicine is an award-winning project run by the Birmingham-based choir Ex Cathedra since 2004. It enables children with life-limiting conditions to participate in singing activities and experience the wider benefits of singing.

### In sickness and in singing

Rebecca Ledgard, Ex Cathedra's Director of Education, says that a team of four Singing Medicine vocal tutors spends every Friday at the hospital. They visit children in the intensive care and burns units, and the neurology, cardiac, liver, oncology and haemodialysis wards. "All our efforts are about making those ten minutes with a child and their family joyous," says Rebecca. **"We aim to bring all the benefits of singing into that short amount of time in order to transport them from the stressful and often boring environment of a hospital ward."**



# Headteacher interview with Peter Pretlove



Ten years ago, you wouldn't have found Peter Pretlove singing in the corridor. A self-confessed non-musician who 'cannot read music', Peter arrived as the Headteacher at Bransgore Primary School, in the New Forest, committed to one thing – ensuring all pupils from all backgrounds received a valuable education. Never afraid to do things differently, he initially focused on reviewing curriculum teaching and even invited a group of trainee teachers to work at the school. But, if you ask him now why he has an enviable SATs record, an Outstanding from Ofsted and a community that's closer than ever, he'll tell you about the day he started singing.

Bransgore's Sing Up success story began in 2008 at an International Primary Curriculum Conference in Geneva. Having always found singing slightly inaccessible – linked to worship in assemblies or end-of-term concerts – Peter was inspired by composer and singing expert Lin Marsh's Sing Up session. Lin explained how singing is less about musical notation and more about being part of something

– and learning along the way. "Many people growing up were told they couldn't sing or were tone deaf, so they, like me, shied away from the subject," says Peter. "Lin helped us see the powerful link between singing and movement. Once we got hold of that idea, we got behind it."

## Singing success

Keen to harness the power of singing, Peter returned to the New Forest to face his biggest challenge – convincing colleagues. "I knew if we went back and told everyone to start singing we

**“Singing is a real leveller and it's brought us closer. We're all learners together, standing side by side”**

would get nowhere," admits Peter. So, following a secret meeting with those who attended the conference, Peter and his team came up with a plan.

Firstly, they produced a pirate-themed INSET day for staff, weaving in songs to show how singing can inspire learning. "Initially, they thought we were mad – with us dressed up as pirates – but by the end of the day they were convinced to give it a go." And secondly, they

selected passionate non-specialist singing champions Nicky Pollitt and David Green to help the school find its voice. "David is 6ft 4in tall and not your average singer," adds Peter, "but by leading from the front, he is saying: 'If I can do it, anyone can.' They've both done a great job."

If the songs at Friday afternoon weekly Big Sings – to which parents, staff and pupils are invited – are anything to go by, Bransgore Primary School has gone from strength to strength since Peter's first rendition of *Pirates!*

For example:

- Singing is helping teachers with the curriculum in every classroom
- The Friday Big Sing is so popular it also happens on a Monday to wake everyone up
- The playground now has Singing Stops where children can perform and play games
- Pupils regularly request to sing as part of their Golden Time ('for keeping the golden rules')
- The school has a PGCE choir and staff choir
- They have even started Bransgore Radio to spread the word and showcase the school's love of singing!

For Peter, Bransgore has been transformed into a 'community that sings'. Beyond the gates, pupils are using the Song Bank at home, singing at parties and encouraging people to 'sing up' wherever they are. "We've had no resistance at all," says Peter. "In fact, one parent came to me and said that her child used to pretend to be a teacher at home, but now arranges 'Sing Up time' so they can sing together. We've formed a parents' choir at a local church and KS2 decided to invite parents to sing with them at Christmas. It wasn't a concert – more a chance to bring people together through singing."

## Learning together

Sing Up has changed lives – and Peter is the first to applaud it. But it's not just improved SATs scores that he cites as its biggest success. Year 6 chose songs to be played before the exams and were calmer and more focused as a result.

*"Sing Up has transformed the boys in terms of engagement and helped us tackle inequality in education. The older boys are singing, leading the dancing and inspiring those younger than them to do the same. They've made it cool. Sing Up has also provided real opportunities for those from deprived backgrounds. The voice is an instrument everyone can afford. It's accessible to all and has shown many of our pupils that school isn't a place to feel deprived. Singing is a real leveller and it's brought us closer. We're all learners together, standing side by side."*

It's from seeing at first hand the social and emotional benefits created by singing that Peter is now one of Sing Up's most energetic supporters. "Singing makes us all feel good. It raises self-esteem, improves concentration and acts as a mood changer to create an environment conducive to learning." Once a Headteacher scared of the music curriculum, Peter is now leading a team 'hungry for

**“Singing creates an environment conducive to learning”**

singing development'. As well as helping the Music Co-ordinator deliver the music curriculum, they are learning about how musicality comes through singing, and hope to be hitting even higher notes in Bransgore's corridors by 2011.

## Peter's top tips on how to get your community moving

- **Gather your supporters:** If you can involve every teacher from an early stage and make them as enthusiastic as you about what can be achieved, it won't be hard to encourage the children to sing

- **Champion your non-musicians:** Make sure your Sing Up Champions aren't music specialists. This will help you show that singing is more about having fun and joining in than performing for an audience
- **Keep on moving:** Sing Up is about getting everyone standing and singing, so let children move – even when you're explaining things
- **Go online:** Sing Up's resources are easy to access and useful for busy teachers
- **Train to gain:** The training through Sing Up's Area Leaders helps take things to a new level. Having grasped the basics ourselves, Sing Up's CPD opportunities enabled us to overcome our fears and get on with things
- **Sing for success:** Singing is a powerful tool for engaging pupils. We like to sing straight after a discussion about behaviour to encourage children to channel their energies back into learning.

### Bransgore Primary School

Location: Bransgore Village in the New Forest

Size: 339

Age range: 4-11

Ofsted: 'Outstanding' – 2007

More: A large primary school serves a rural catchment area which includes a local authority gypsy site

# Red Marsh School



gradually teachers and teaching assistants who hadn't sung much with their children began to do more and more singing. Sing Up has massively increased our repertoire and has proved to be a big hit with the children."

// Sing Up has proved to be a big hit with the children //

## The big concert

In spring 2010, all the hard work paid off. Ian and his pupils were invited to sing at the 'Sing Up for Your Friends' concert at Preston Guild Hall. It was a day that they will never forget. Ian comments, "It was awesome singing with 600 other children. The sound we all made was amazing, especially accompanied by the excellent live band. The children still sing the songs from the concert and one boy, James, carries the CD of the songs around with him everywhere. In terms of raising their confidence and self-esteem, it was invaluable."

## Advice for others

For Red Marsh, Sing Up has inspired both children and teachers alike. **When asked if he had any tips on newcomers to Sing Up, he advises that teachers simply immerse**

**themselves in it. "Don't be afraid to join in and have a go,"** he urges. "There are songs for every occasion and theme. The children will soon tell you which songs they love. You never know, you may even start to enjoy it."



### Red Marsh School (a Community Special School)

*Location:* Thonton Cleveleys, near Blackpool in Lancashire

*Number of pupils:* 74

*Age of pupils:* 2-19

*Ofsted says:* "Good" – 2009

*Sing Up Award:* Silver Award

*More:* All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have a statement of Special Educational Needs because of their severe, complex and/or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

Red Marsh School in Lancashire, teaching children and young people with severe learning and autistic spectrum disorders, has been using Sing Up since early 2009. They've enjoyed it so much that they sang in a major regional choir concert and have also received a Sing Up Silver Award.

## Starting out

Singing had always played an important part in the school day, bringing smiles to the pupils' faces and helping their learning. When Sing Up was introduced, Ian Squire, Red Marsh's music leader, wanted all teachers to get involved. "At first some were very reluctant to sing in front of their children," he says, "but

# Hotspur Primary School

One of the most important aspects of Sing Up's work is to improve the confidence of teachers in leading singing activities. In some cases, this has to start from the very bottom rung of the ladder, as Hotspur's Year 1 class teacher found out.

## Singing conquers all

Leanne Richardson had been told when she was at school that she was tone deaf. So she was terrified of singing when she came to work as the school's Year 1 class teacher. Through the support and encouragement of Hotspur's Headteacher Miles Wallis-Clarke, Leanne has attended CPD and now uses singing regularly in the classroom.

"I always felt very embarrassed about singing in front of children," Leanne says. The Song Bank has



// Music is a particular strength of the school, and the excellent quality of singing has received national recognition //

helped her to gain confidence, beginning with playing the recorded songs. "It's a great resource as there are so many songs to search through. Eventually I sang the songs in front of my class." Singing is now a normal part of daily school life. Her pupils, who have no idea about her previous reservations, have made comments including: "We like singing with our teacher", and "She has a lovely voice".

Leanne no longer feels self-conscious about singing, and now realises what she had been missing by not using it in the classroom. **Through singing, the children are enjoying learning in a positive learning atmosphere, and Leanne reports that behaviour has improved rapidly in the past year.**

## Low anxiety

Leanne explains her new-found freedom from anxiety. "I have now sung in front of visitors to the class – something I would never have imagined doing three years ago. I always had hang-ups about my

own singing from school and regretted not being able to sing. I now realise that I can. I can see the pleasure that children get from singing and I am so pleased that I can now contribute to our schools great singing reputation."

Ofsted has echoed this, saying in March 2009 that "Music is a particular strength of the school, and the excellent quality of singing has received national recognition". Or, as one pupil puts it, "everyone likes singing".



### Hotspur Primary School

*Location:* Newcastle Upon Tyne

*Number of pupils:* 335

*Age of pupils:* 3-11

*Ethnic mix:* "a socially diverse community of mixed cultures"

*Free school meals:* "nearly twice the national average"

*Ofsted says:* "Good" – 2009

*Sing Up Award:* Platinum Award

## Headteacher interview with Liz Hills



We asked Liz Hills, Headteacher at Ilderton Primary School in South London, for her insight and advice into how her school has engaged with Sing Up.

**Q: How did you introduce singing to your school? Did you bring about this change, or was it like this before?**

A: I'm a musician and I know what difference music makes to the lives of children. When I first came here, there was very little going on so I started up a choir and a recorder group. I remember one day after choir practice a kid picked up a pair of bongo drums and started drumming, and his brother sat down and they started playing different rhythms together. I then said, "Wow, that's good, can you teach the other kids?!" That got a lot of kids interested.

**Q: From a Headteacher's perspective, what do you think singing brings to a school?**

A: It's brought a real sense of achievement, a sense of community and a sense of pride and confidence

to the children...all things they didn't have and now have in abundance.

**Q: Do you have any specific examples?**

A: I've got some kids with special needs and there is one little girl who is quite severely dyslexic. She was working hard but she could see the other children were sometimes progressing more quickly. She started coming to choir and her mum has said that she's a "changed child". So it does make a difference to all the children. They take the self-esteem they get from the choir back into class. It's a confidence thing.

// I know what difference music makes to the lives of children //

**Q: How do you involve everyone in singing across the school?**

A: We do lots of singing all the way across the school and beyond. For example, recently, we started a weekly singing session in breakfast club where I teach new songs. The support staff who run the breakfast club then practice these during the week and are beginning to bring in and teach songs that they know.

**Q: And how do you involve the School Leadership Team (SLT)?**

A: In a number of ways, including taking the Chair of Governors and

members of the SLT out with me whenever we go to perform so they can see what we are doing. I am also getting SLT members to take singing assemblies - although these are really run by some of the Year 6 children!

**Q: Is there an example you can give of how you are currently working with other schools, in the community or with parents through singing?**

A: We are in a two-school federation and I am supporting my other school to develop their singing leaders - both teachers and support staff. I am also supporting a singing teacher at another school to lead singing assemblies and develop a choir.

**Q: Can you give us one key Sing Up moment for the school since becoming a Platinum Award School?**

A: Singing on the stage set for Oliver at Drury Lane and meeting Nancy, Oliver and Dodger on National Sing Up Day in February 2010.

### Ilderton Primary School

Location: Peckham, London

Size: 343

Age Range: 3-11

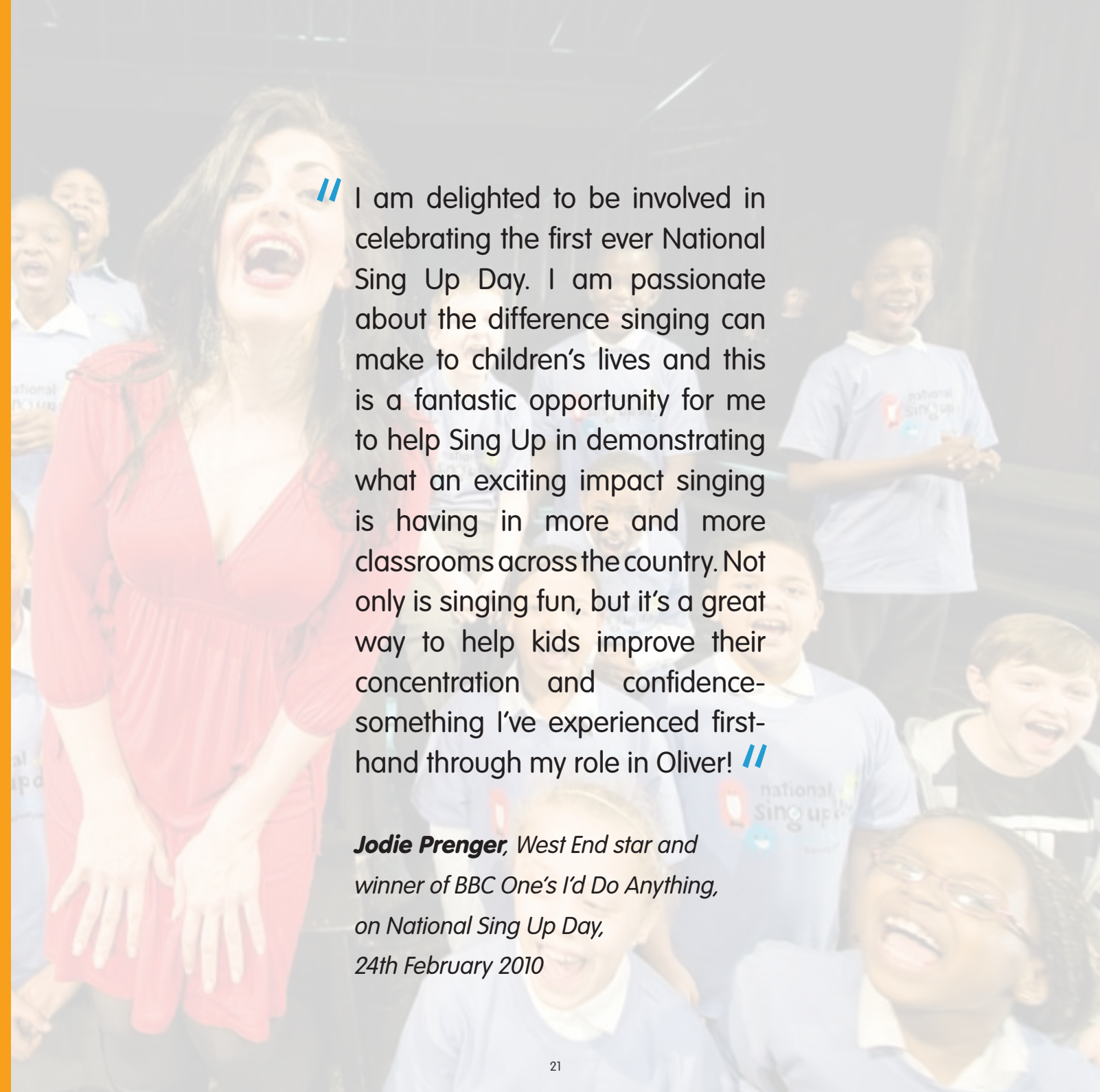
Ofsted: "Good" - 2008

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

More: A large primary school serves a culturally diverse community.

Free school meal eligibility is high.

Two-thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds



// I am delighted to be involved in celebrating the first ever National Sing Up Day. I am passionate about the difference singing can make to children's lives and this is a fantastic opportunity for me to help Sing Up in demonstrating what an exciting impact singing is having in more and more classrooms across the country. Not only is singing fun, but it's a great way to help kids improve their concentration and confidence - something I've experienced first-hand through my role in Oliver! //

**Jodie Prenger, West End star and winner of BBC One's I'd Do Anything, on National Sing Up Day, 24th February 2010**

# Fosse Way Primary School

Fosse Way is a large primary school that has decided to draw on the energy and expertise of its own pupils to develop singing activities in the school. The impetus for this came from the children in the junior choir, who were “desperate” to help out with an infant choir that ran at lunchtime.

## Expert input

The Music Co-ordinator Kerry Cant invited the keen juniors along to infant choir and the infants responded enthusiastically. “They would really listen to their instructions on how to stand with the correct posture,” she says. The

idea of recruiting ‘experts’ from the pupil body wasn’t new to the school. It already has a variety of different experts ranging from animation and ICT experts to reading experts who encourage younger children to read. “In order to be an expert you have to be able to teach somebody else your skill, therefore you need good knowledge of your subject area.”

“ We must provide good role models for the children in school “

## Applying yourself

Year 6 children apply in writing for the post of ‘Singing Expert’. Initially, there were 12 applications, and five were chosen to share the responsibilities of the job. “The standards of applications were fantastic,” says Kerry, “and the children love to rise to the challenge of applying for positions within school – and of course written applications help ensure the standards for literacy remain high.”



### Fosse Way Primary School

Location: North Hykeham, near Lincoln

Number of pupils: 552

Age of pupils: 3-11

Ofsted says: “Good” – 2006

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

More: “more pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs than is typical of a school of this size nationally”

## Interview time

Kerry Cant interviewed some of the school’s Singing Experts.

### Q: What is a Singing Expert?

A: A Singing Expert is someone who champions singing and encourages children to sing and show off their talents around school.

### Q: What qualities do you need to be a Singing Expert?

A: We must love singing – that is the most important quality. We must also be responsible and to be able to be trusted on our own and we must provide good role models for the children in school.

### Q: What are your responsibilities?

A: On Tuesday lunchtimes we help Mrs Cant with infant choir, we bring them in from the playground and take them through warm-ups before Mrs Cant comes to start their songs. We use the Sing Up website to gather our resources before choir. We also lead warm-ups in junior choir and prepare the children ready for choir. We help in singing assemblies twice a week and often lead the movement at the front of the assembly.

We organise performances weekly on both the infant and junior playgrounds. The junior playground has a stage called Lauren’s Place and children sign up if they wish to perform on their own. We organise their equipment and the audience! Similarly on the infant playground we have a bandstand where the infants perform their songs too.

We also think it is important for us to perform so we started off the performances in the autumn term and we will perform once a term. We do singing on the infant playgrounds every Wednesday playtime to encourage singing games and whole group singing (which the children love).

### Q: How do you think you make a difference in our school?

A: We make a difference by encouraging more people to enjoy singing and giving the opportunities to sing and perform to one another. The children also have the opportunity then to listen and appraise performances and offer ways to improve their singing. We

also encourage the children to stand and breathe properly to make a fantastic sound – a bit like Mrs Cant in choir!

### Q: And finally do you enjoy being a Singing Expert?

A: We love it because we get to do a variety of really fun jobs, we like being leaders and having the responsibility in school. We also really enjoy leading warm-ups in assembly, it gives our teacher a well deserved rest but also gives us the opportunity to lead 300 children in song and that’s amazing. We like feeling important within the school and have really enjoyed our job roles. We will really miss it in September.



# John Scurr Primary School



Evidence that singing is a powerful way of binding a school community together comes from John Scurr Primary, an unusually large primary school based in Stepney, East London.

## Community focus

The Headteacher and Governors know how powerful singing can be in promoting a sense of shared community at the school. They encourage everyone to get involved, particularly through singing in school assemblies. "Music is a powerful, unique form of communication that can change the way we feel, think and act," says Headteacher Bridget Fagan. "As an integral part of culture, past

// Music is a powerful, unique form of communication //

and present, it helps children understand themselves and relate to others, forging important links between home and school."

## Singing is universal

Like many schools in London, John Scurr is culturally diverse. A majority of John Scurr's pupils come from Bangladeshi backgrounds, speaking English as an additional language. Almost half these children, especially in the younger classes, are at the early stages of learning English.

In school assemblies they often sing in a variety of foreign languages, in particular, in Bengali, one of the predominant community languages. Parents are encouraged to join in with special events. **Through singing they continue to foster a welcome and inclusive ethos, celebrating diversity and individuality.**

## The wider community

The school also uses singing to help build links with other schools and the wider community. For example, each year the children perform at homes for the elderly. The school support local and national causes through fundraising events involving singing. They also take part in singing projects with the local education action zone, and in special occasions involving other local schools.

Recently, in one of many projects, there was a school exchange with the

Sing Up Cluster Penzance East, which comprises six schools in Cornwall. Under the banner of Extended Schools, a day of music, theatre and dance was organised at John Scurr School. Activities included not just singing but also sword-fighting and Bollywood dance. Chloe, a pupil from Cornwall, said: "It was fantastic! We exchanged musical experiences and songs. The children from John Scurr were so lovely - we definitely made new friends!"



### John Scurr Primary School

Location: Stepney, East London

Number of pupils: 462

Age of pupils: 3-11

Ethnic mix: Mostly Bangladeshi

Free school meals: "higher than average"

Ofsted says: "Good" – 2009

Sing Up Award: Platinum Award

// Music and singing have the power to touch the soul, and often, where words or actions have failed, music can meet a person's deeper need. Singing is soul food and builds self-confidence... Concepts that are hard to grasp can be made so much easier to understand when set to music. //

**Carrie and David Grant,**  
from Sing Up's *Get singing, get healthy!* resource

**Sing Up would like to thank all schools who have contributed to these case studies and for all the ongoing support, commitment and enthusiasm from every school involved with Sing Up.**

More details about all of our projects can be found at [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org). Our website not only features key resources but also news items from around the country and success stories from across the strands of the programme.

## Consortium Partners

The Sing Up programme is led by a consortium of four partners, and works closely with other key national projects and organisations.

- **Youth Music** – the UK’s largest children’s music charity
- **AMV-BBDO** – one of the UK’s leading advertising agencies
- **Faber Music** – one of Britain’s leading music publishers
- **The Sage Gateshead** – an international home for musical discovery.

Associate Partners:

- **ContinYou**
- **Federation of Music Services**
- **Sing Up** also includes the **Chorister Outreach Programme**, run by the **Choir Schools association**.

## The Sing Up Awards

The Sing Up Awards aim to recognise and celebrate schools that place singing at the heart of school life. They provide a supportive framework to guide schools on their own individual singing journey to embed singing in their school. The Awards are flexible and accessible to all primary-age schools because the criteria can be adapted to all settings and circumstances and tailored to the wider development needs of the school. In this way, the Awards are non-competitive and schools can feel supported by their Sing Up community. Over 3,000 schools have pledged to the Awards so far, finding them to be supportive of existing provisions and motivating the school to achieve more. The Sing Up Awards support and contribute toward other school initiatives and provide a structure for whole school development. Find out more at [www.singup.org/awards](http://www.singup.org/awards).

## Contact Info

If you would like to get in touch, please visit the ‘Contact Us’ section of the website and email us using the online form. You can also contact our support team on **tel: 020 7902 2939**.

“ That is what I like about Sing Up, the wholeness of it. Singing is not just there for one or two kids. Singing helps all children to flourish. ”

**Mike Welsh**, *President of the National Association of Head Teachers*

# sing up

Help kids find their voice

[www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org)



Sing Up, the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government.