



February 2009 - the state of play....

Sing Up launched in November 2007; its aim, by March 2011, to enable every primary school-aged child to take part in high-quality singing activity every day, and for all primary schools in England to become 'Singing Schools'. Sing Up is part of the Government's £332 million investment in music education, brought about through the work of the Music Manifesto and Singing Ambassador Howard Goodall, and recognising that singing is one of the most important activities in children's lives, directly contributing to their educational, social, behavioural, cognitive and cultural, as well as musical, development.

Sing Up aims to change the culture of singing by embedding within the workforce (school staff, vocal experts and the wider children's workforce) the confidence and skills to lead high-quality singing activities. Thus, this unprecedented investment in primary-age singing will have a legacy well beyond the four years of the programme, as the support and resources developed by Sing Up's leading consortium of partners will establish a new and lasting approach to delivering quality singing activity across the school.

Where are we now?

15 months in, and with 25 to go, we are ahead of schedule. More than half of all primary-age schools in England have registered with Sing Up; over 20,000 people have participated in our training & CPD activity; our Song Bank has over 200 songs, warm-ups, games and other activities, and our specially funded programmes have brought high-quality singing activities to children across the country, all with sustainability at their core.

Our 30 Area Leaders now cover the entire country. We already have positive working relationships with most local authority Music Services, Youth Music Action Zones and Choir Schools, and are working with Specialist Music and Performing Arts Colleges at Secondary level to develop their work with primary schools, particularly through the Extended Schools programme.

Our campaign strand has raised awareness amongst teachers, parents, children and the general public, of the value of singing, as both a teaching tool and a confidence aid. We have developed a branded initiative which is widely recognised and supported, and our communications have driven an average of 20,000 visitors per week to our website.

What do we know?

We know from our comprehensive national research that Sing Up is working, and that it is contributing to the necessary improvements in school music provision. Our combination of training & CPD with a vast bank of accompanying resources is giving teachers what they need to develop their singing provision. Helen in Leeds says: *“[Sing Up] has lifted music to another level in my school....Being a music coordinator in a primary school with no musical qualifications as such but much enthusiasm and passion these are a great guide.”*

We know that in order to embrace singing fully some schools need our help, and they need it over time in order to embed and sustain their provision. We might provide this support through CPD for teachers, a wider range of repertoire, lesson plans and activity notes, or connection with vocal experts in the area. And for many, a framing of the journey towards becoming a Singing School is essential. The Sing Up Awards are helping to achieve this, as well as providing recognition for those many schools who have succeeded in placing singing at their heart.

What next?

Over the next phase of the programme we'll be reaching those schools that, for a variety of reasons, have yet to engage with Sing Up. We're reaching out directly to Head Teachers and staff to help them to understand the value of singing as a cross-curricular teaching tool and that it isn't something to be scared of, but rather something that all the staff and pupils can enjoy and easily adopt into their day.

For those schools who have already engaged with Sing Up, we are helping to embed singing more deeply, and free it up from being something that just the Music Coordinator does. We're improving our personalised support to different types of singing leader, so that they can get the best from what we have to offer, and feel empowered to help others. And we're ensuring that the future workforce is skilled and confident, by developing young singing leaders.

We are widening the breadth and diversity of our resources, in terms of repertoire and in our supporting materials, so that singing can be more effectively used across the curriculum.

We're also exploring and disseminate best practice in singing provision for children outside of mainstream education, including children in care, privately educated, and those with special educational needs.

It can be done!

Sing Up is not owned by the Government, nor by its Consortium of partners, but by everyone who believes that improving singing changes lives, produces better citizens, and helps us to enjoy and participate in a love which we all share - music.