

Impact on Schools

Sing Up 2007-2011
Programme Evaluation
Theme 3

Sing Up 2007-2011 Programme Evaluation

Sing Up 2007-2011 was the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, led by Youth Music, with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. It aimed to raise the status of singing and increase opportunities for school children throughout the country to enjoy singing as part of their everyday lives, and to support all primary schools to become 'singing schools'.

Sing Up commissioned the Centre for Use of Research & Evidence in Education (CUREE) to undertake an external evaluation of the whole programme. The evaluations are presented as follows:

- Synthesis Report including Executive Summary
- Probe & Case Study Report
 - Themed Reports:
 1. Communications
 2. Health & Wellbeing
 3. Impact on Schools
 4. Learning Across the Curriculum
 5. Management of Change
 6. Musical Development
 7. Partnership
 8. Speech, Language and Communication
 9. Transition
 10. Workforce Development
 11. Youth Leadership

The full set of reports can be found on the Sing Up website: www.singup.org

Further information about CUREE can be found at: www.curee-paccts.com

Introduction

Sing Up 2007-11 was the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, led by Youth Music, with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. It aimed to raise the status of singing and increase opportunities for school children throughout the country to enjoy singing as part of their everyday lives, and to support all primary schools to become 'singing schools'.

Sing Up operated through four main strands of activity: a national PR and advertising **campaign** highlighting the benefits of singing; singing **resources**, through the twin vehicles of a website www.singup.org (including a 'Song Bank') and a free termly magazine with CD; a **workforce development** programme to build the confidence and expertise of primary school teachers, musicians and others in leading and supporting children's singing activities, with a supporting network of 30 Sing Up Area Leaders; **funded programmes**, supporting the development of singing activity around the country.

By March 2011 Sing Up had engaged with over 95% of state primary schools and over 90% of all schools with primary school-aged children in them.

Background

'By becoming involved in the Sing Up programme these school staff have become more familiar with musical education and as a result their teaching in this area has improved'

Impact has been a broad aim of Sing Up from the beginning; as early as the tender submission for the project 'the impact of singing on school life' was anticipated. In thinking about evaluating that impact, a specific definition for generalised aims and aspirations was formalised as:

"Impact on schools' will measure how singing and Sing Up have impacted on schools either through formal routes (Self Evaluation Form, School Improvement Plan, school leadership) or through more non-formal effects – the school as a community and microcosm of society for example.'

What is clear is that the impact demonstrated by schools as a result of participating in Sing Up is wide and varied in the schools providing data for this report, ranging from one class singing with their teacher to the whole school working to achieve Platinum in the Award Scheme by becoming singing/Sing Up ambassadors for their community. Whilst the positive impact of singing and Sing Up on schools has been perceived across different types



of Sing Up projects,¹ it has not always been easy to tie this feeling down. For projects which set out with specific goals in mind for whole schools or projects, impact levels were duly recorded. But the focus of the programme was singing rather than school improvement and the complexities of separating Sing Up effects from other school improvement effects are too great a burden for the kinds of qualitative evidence available in Sing Up reports. The report therefore focuses

1. For the purposes of this report, a project was defined as an aspect of activity carried out as part of the Sing Up programme. Projects therefore range in nature and include specific interventions; their types (e.g. Sing Up Awards); organisations and areas, leading a variety of strands of work; various communications activities and their analysis, etc.

on illustrating the specific perceived benefits reported in the projects that highlighted this as a particular feature of Sing Up work. On several occasions projects whose achievement did not envisage having a whole school impact, nonetheless resulted in perceived benefits for different groups across the whole school community.

Enrichment of Learning and the Curriculum

'Children walk round the school singing; the office reception staff sing more. The programme has affected the whole school'

A significant outcome for some schools has been the improvement in the quality of singing and music teaching. By becoming involved in the Sing Up programme these school staff have become more familiar with musical education and as a result their teaching in this area has improved. One school that was part of the Voices Foundation under the Funded Programmes strand was particularly impressed:

'All teachers in the school have improved the quality of their music teaching. Even the least confident is able to ask more musically demanding information from their children. Staff now understand why they are asking these questions in music lessons and now can fully comprehend the answer.'

In other schools providing data for this report, involvement in Sing Up has created an environment for using singing in cross-curricular activities. A number of schools used songs from the Sing Up Song Bank across a number of subjects including maths, history, French and science. There was a specific focus on providing songs that could be used across the curriculum on the Song Bank, and this has been evidenced in the evaluation of this theme. 'Singing helps confidence and creativity: I get the children to create extra verses, or I use a song as a stimulus for creative activities.'

Development of Whole School Culture and Ethos

'Involvement in Sing Up here generated conversation and peer engagement amongst staff 'which has slowly changed the culture of learning within the school'

The impact singing and Sing Up has had on the school as a community has been a noticeable theme emerging from the data for the schools included in this report. For example one school that was part of the Voices Foundation project noted that as a result of Sing Up, it is not only children who walk around the school singing, but also staff across the school: 'Children walk round the school singing; the office reception staff sing more. The programme has affected the whole school.'

Another school noted how playground leaders regularly led informal singing during break times, and that they now frequently have singing shows for the children to perform in. They have also created a staff choir, and put singing workshops and leadership courses on for staff which have been regularly attended.

Adopting a whole school and whole staff approach to Sing Up had benefits, including increasing the confidence of teachers in singing, which influenced the actions and confidence of their colleagues in some schools. In one project, for example, this went as far as teachers working together to compare notes and try out ideas on one another. Involvement in Sing Up here generated conversation and peer engagement amongst staff 'which has slowly changed the culture of learning within the school'.

'If a class starts 'playing up', the teacher will start singing, the children automatically join in and everybody calms down'

Enjoyment of singing was another whole school impact reflected in schools and projects. The popularity of music and singing increased amongst children in the schools and projects this report draws on. This has resulted in an increase in the amount of time children want to spend practising to perfect their performance. On occasions this has also carried over to their school work, particularly when other areas of the curriculum have used singing as a learning tool.

One school that had achieved a Sing Up Gold Award was pleased when 65 out of 129 children turned up for the first choir practice of the year, and proudly reported how the children all sang during assemblies, especially when parents were present. Another school, part of the Southampton Sing Up Community, held a concert for the whole school community, including parents and non-teaching staff in which everybody came together to enjoy 'the joy of music and song'. 'The concert uplifted our spirits and brought home the importance of celebration and recognising the talents of our young people.'



In a number of reports, school practitioners noticed that singing could have positive impact on the behaviour of children, with one school stating how it now uses singing as a behaviour strategy. If a class starts 'playing up', the teacher will start singing, the children automatically join in and everybody calms down. Another school noted an unexpected positive impact on the children's team working abilities.

Plymouth Music Zone (PMZ) created an evaluation framework for their schools to use in assessing the impact of Sing Up. This included questionnaires to participants (i.e. the pupils), as well as from parents, teachers and singing leaders. They used the evaluation framework to evaluate their With One Voice project working with Plymouth's special schools (schools for children with Special Educational Needs). The results indicated that 87.5% of participants were able to make music or sound with their voice or instrument after participation. They then linked the findings to the five aspects of Every Child Matters in order to consider how to go forward with their project. Aiming at creating a sustainable legacy for their project, the Greater Manchester Music Action Zone (GMMAZ), developed a range of processes that they feel could be made into a 'toolkit' for organisations/practitioners to follow when setting out on their Sing Up journey:

'The key word is obviously 'sustainable', so it is important that whatever practices are used, successfully establish singing as part of classroom life, and within the teachers own teaching practice...Facilitating these outcomes, through the teachers, with the support and guidance of the project staff was a major achievement of the project, and the structures and practices we have used to achieve this are what should be passed on.'

Addressing School Development Priorities

'singing contributed to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the school through whole school singing activities, including concerts and assemblies'

Some schools connected the use of singing and their school development priorities. For example, two schools involved in a Cluster programme have now included singing as one of the school's formal priorities in their 2010 – 2011 Development Plan. A number of other schools in the same Cluster were also looking to redress the balance of singing so that it was equally weighted across the key stages. Three other schools indicated Sing Up and singing had had an impact on their Ofsted inspection. For example in one school the inspectors noticed how the school used singing to contribute and support other subjects. In the other two schools singing contributed to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the school through whole school singing activities, including concerts and assemblies. Ofsted also noted in one school, how singing was seen by all staff as important to the development of the whole child, with the school's Sing Up Ambassador commenting that: '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.'

Staff Development

Another dimension of impact of the Sing Up programme on schools has been staff development. Sing Up Area Leaders have helped teachers and schools access training programmes and supported teachers to engage with the programme through off site training as well as extensive in-school support:

'We realised that teachers training was key to sustainability, and with Glyn's experience as a teacher in school and as a singing leader and as Area Leader, she was well placed to introduce staff to the Song Bank and ideas for warm ups, whilst providing further support and opportunities for training when needed.'

Many teachers have commented on how singing-related Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has become embedded in their schools. The Kirklees group of schools that were part of a Vocal Force project, have developed a tradition of CPD over a number of months, at the end of which staff and children put on a performance of their singing. Other schools have asked for additional CPD from their Sing Up Area Leader, including training for support staff such as lunchtime staff so that they can lead singing in the playground.



Community

Involvement in the community was an integral part of many projects in the Sing Up programme, particularly through the Funded Programmes strand, that looked to support local organisations deliver quality music and singing. Ex Cathedra, for example, a Sing Up Flagship, has worked with local music services to develop a model of singing that can spread across a city or county area. They believe this will have a long term impact on the singing landscape by rolling it out to music services across the country.

The Sing Up London Consortium have developed community partnerships across boroughs, who together have created a team of people involved in music and singing, including stage managers, back stage crew and young music mentors: 'We can see some huge cross-fertilisation of opportunities and skills emerging. The partnership is working for us. Our most recent events have elicited huge and positive responses from parents and schools.'

Sound Minds, a project working under the Funded Programmes strand, had singing leaders, mental health professionals and musicians as part of their team, who all participated in the training sessions. They worked with trainee singing leaders in developing their leadership skills to take the project forward.

The use of awards to promote whole school impact

To date 750 schools have been awarded either a Silver, Gold or Platinum award as part of the Sing Up Award scheme.² According to the Sing Up Final Awards Evaluation report 'schools are motivated to complete an award because they see the potential it has on many aspects of school life', such as building a sense of community among staff and pupils, as well as contributing to wider curriculum aims. As one school noted the award scheme was:

'...a most effective model of school improvement, one that raised standards of achievement for all pupils, improved standards of teaching and gave curriculum opportunities that were not previously available...the pride on the children's faces, the level of engagement and obvious enjoyment was what will be remembered by staff and most importantly by children'. (Benton Park Primary School)



2. Sing Up Website available at: <http://www.singup.org/> accessed 22nd February 2011

Methods

‘...a most effective model of school improvement, one that raised standards of achievement for all pupils, improved standards of teaching and gave curriculum opportunities that were not previously available...the pride on the children’s faces, the level of engagement and obvious enjoyment was what will be remembered by staff and most importantly by children’. (Benton Park Primary School)

Ninety nine project reports and related evidence, ranging between internal evaluations and external assessment, were selected by Sing Up as a basis for a number of synthesis evaluation reports. The documents were coded by a team of CUREE researchers as likely to yield evidence for each of the themed reports. The data were then extracted by the same team, using Nvivo software, for each of the themes identified by Sing Up. The data extraction framework, based on questions focused on both impact and processes for each of the themes, was agreed in advance with Sing Up. The resulting data was then analysed and synthesised so that the key messages for each theme could be reported.

The current report is based on the documents which were identified as containing data relevant to the theme of Impact on Schools. A total of 12 projects had information relating to the theme. Types of the evidence collected by the projects that provided the basis for this report included:

- school staff perceptions/quotes;
- music specialist perceptions/quotes;
- pupil and parent perceptions/quotes; and
- school staff survey.

Glossary

Sing Up Awards

The Awards have helped schools to embed singing throughout their school life, encouraging them to celebrate their singing. There are three different levels of Award: Silver, Gold and Platinum. The Awards are specially designed to work across different types of school, including SEN settings.

Beyond the Mainstream (BTM)

Sing Up made a commitment to ensure that its work impacts upon all primary aged children, including children in SEN schools, Pupil Referral Units, looked after children, children with mental health issues and many others early in 2009, and the stream of work that underpins this commitment throughout the programme is called Beyond the Mainstream. BTM broadly focuses on children who can't access primary mainstream school (in SEN or PRU settings) as well as those who have difficulties accessing primary mainstream (including looked after children, children with EBD, children with mental health difficulties etc).

Sing Up Clusters

Sing Up Clusters have helped secondary schools to lead innovative singing projects with their feeder primary schools. The programme aims to train and inspire singing leaders and enables schools to work positively with pupils' transition issues. Clusters work with 240 schools across the nation, introducing exciting singing opportunities to over 7,500 pupils.

Sing Up Flagships

Sing Up Flagships are leading singing advocate organisations that work to share and develop best practice through projects, performances and resources. Nine organisations have worked as Flagships, with most programmes typically lasting 2 years. Thousands of children, practitioners and singing leaders have benefited nationwide from their work.

Sing Up Communities

Sing Up Communities have been run by arts organisations and music services that work with primary-aged children. They aim to place singing at the heart of the community. Each project has run for two years and aims to reach over 2,000 primary-aged children. Work includes the development of young singing leaders and encouraging singing out of school hours.

Vocal Force

Vocal Force was originally a project based on the innovative Vocal Union programme devised by The Sage Gateshead, before becoming part of Sing Up in 2008. Vocal Force aimed to foster a peer support network for sharing learning and exploring ways of sustaining networks. It has created over 60 bespoke projects to increase the skills, confidence and repertoire of more than 3,000 singing leaders.