

Synthesis Report

including Executive Summary

Sing Up 2007-2011
Programme Evaluation

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

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Executive Summary

Background

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'.

The Evidence Base

This report synthesises the main findings from 11 thematic reports. Most of the data for these reports were qualitative – many projects¹ collected a variety of perception data from adult and young leaders, music leaders, young people and sometimes parents. But two evaluations offered quantitative evidence about the impact of participating in Sing Up on young people's musical development and confidence.

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.

Impacts

For the children and young people whose experiences are reflected in our 11 themed reports:

- there were clear advances in their singing during the Sing Up programme, from the hard-won, but significant steps made by those with learning and/or physical disabilities to the experienced singers from choirs who showed improvements in, for example, pitch and accuracy;
- advances in musical learning and development appeared to go hand in hand with affective developments, such as improved confidence, self-esteem, enjoyment of singing and greater social cohesion; and
- there was evidence of enhanced cross-curricular learning, including greater recall of facts, deeper engagement with the curriculum, and improved language and mathematics skills.

For the teachers, the training and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions and supported classroom practice and resources:

- built confidence amongst non-specialist teachers to attempt singing with their pupils, leading to an increase in singing activity;
- helped improve their own singing knowledge and skills (such as composition, harmony, rhythm and how to segment songs) and ability to teach these to young people; and
- enabled them to gain knowledge and understanding of how to use singing to promote speech and language development.

For the adult trainers, the experience of supporting or leading Sing Up had a considerable impact in terms of:

- their own musical skills and knowledge; and
- their understanding and knowledge of working in different settings and with younger and special needs children.

The young singing leaders whose experiences are reflected here:

- learned about teaching – how to encourage children and keep them interested; and
- gained maturity and self-esteem from being given the responsibility.

Through their participation in the Sing Up programme leaders at different levels whose work is reflected here learnt to:

- work with the rhythms and constraints of the involved organisations, and be responsive to participant feedback;
- collaborate with different professionals; and
- embed approaches in order to create sustainability.

For schools whose experiences are explored here there was:

- an improvement in the quality of singing and music teaching and improved ethos and culture; and
- a realisation of the importance of charting and recording developments and achievements for the arts as well as the more usual literacy and numeracy.

Processes

There were some important consistencies in the overall programme approach. They included tailored programme objectives, regular communication, collaboration, performance, accreditation and training/professional development. Many projects forged close working relationships with schools, community agencies and commercial organisations. Building sustained and productive partnerships required much groundwork and relationship building in the early phases.

Conclusions

Sing Up was a substantial programme which combined marketing models to secure reach and professional development to increase skills, knowledge and enthusiasm. There is considerable evidence from research about the transfer of learning between educational environments (departments or key phases, schools,

school clusters or local authority areas) in depth and at scale and the role of professional development in this, that reinforces the effectiveness of this dual approach.

Other important elements of the Sing Up programme which are confirmed by research include:

- effective use of tools and resources (including technology);
- facilitating transition from one school to the next through providing opportunities to meet staff and pupils at new schools; and
- motivating pupils through curriculum experiences they perceive as fun, varied, participative and collaborative.

Implications

Evidence in this report shows the value of many Sing Up approaches but two in particular seem to the research team to have implications for practitioners and policy makers in a wider context:

- The importance of building an infrastructure for and using a wide range of singing activities to support the development of speech, language and communication for special needs children and children for whom English is an additional language
- The benefits that flow from a determined, sustained and structured focus on creating ownership of an intervention through:
 - a mix of researching and paying close attention to the needs, interests and experiences of the people through whom the initiative is to work; and
 - the use of that information to shape both professional development and the design and content of tools and resources.

In addition to the impressive changes reflected in the report for those involved in the projects explored in the theme reports, there is evidence to help Sing Up think about areas where further development would be helpful in future projects:

- Identifying from the start a concrete picture of what success would look like for each key stakeholder group, in order to help collect evidence about impact as a natural part of the work that could be used to refine strategies on an ongoing basis;
- Developing progression mechanisms for a range of transition stages; and
- Encouraging structured dialogue and reflection between professionals on a sustained basis at each key development stage and rooting such dialogue in evidence about student learning.

1. Introduction to Sing Up

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.

1.1 The Evidence Base

This report is a synthesis of the principal findings from the 11 evaluative theme reports. We have looked across all the more detailed theme reports and highlighted commonalities between the projects on which the theme reports were based, and some of the learning shared by the projects. We have not referenced individual sites, schools or settings as these are referenced in the individual theme reports from which the data for this report are taken. The evidence from 86 unique individual sites – including internal evaluations, external assessment and a range of associated documents – provided the basis for this report. This is made up of the reports analysed for each of the theme reports, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Theme	Number of sites
Campaign	15
Health and Wellbeing	22
Impact on Schools	8
Learning Across the Curriculum	25
Management of Change	15
Musical Learning and Development	23
Partnerships	14
Speech, Language and Communication	15
Transition	11
Workforce Development	37
Youth Leadership	16

The sites were identified as likely to yield evidence for individual themes via a coding system. The data were extracted from the documents by a team of researchers using Nvivo software. The data extraction framework was based on a series of differentiated questions for each theme, focused on both impact and process and agreed in advance with Sing Up. The resulting raw data was then analysed and synthesised so that the key messages could be reported in a series of individual theme reports. The latter were then used as the basis of this synthesis report.

Where possible, case study vignettes were included to illustrate and contextualise the findings. Five study visits were completed by the research team. Data was collected through observations, documentary analysis and interviews with school and setting leaders and practitioners, learners and their parents, music specialists and their organisations, and Sing Up Area Leaders. The evidence was synthesised across the settings to create a 'real life portrait'² of the programme.

2. Please see the Sing Up probes (multi-site case study) report for more information.

1.2. Nature of the Evidence

Evidence analysed for the themes suggests that Sing Up Area Leaders and lead organisations under contract to Sing Up tended to be more systematic in collecting evaluation data than schools. Examples of some of these evaluation sources included surveys of participating practitioners and regular (weekly) notes based on observations of children and practice in music professionals' reflective journals. Most of the data were qualitative and did not involve baseline data gathering or measurement.

Many projects complemented the perception data from participating or leading adults with music specialist perceptions and, in a few cases, the collected views of young participants and singing leaders. Individual case studies featured in the project documentation and, in some projects parental perceptions were also collected. Only one of the projects in the theme reports prepared and used a detailed evaluation toolkit, which included participant self assessment as well as external assessment.

Within schools (excluding Sing Up Awards Schools) evidence collection tended to be less organised and feedback more impromptu. This means that evidence about impact on young people was less well documented in some cases than evidence about Sing Up approaches, trainers' experiences and leadership strategies.

Two large-scale external evaluations (Welch 2010, IOE 2011) offer quantitative evidence about the positive impact of participation in Sing Up on young people's musical development and on their confidence generally. This synthesis is based on the largely qualitative internal Sing Up data. These reports offer richly textured illustrations of impact, strategies and learning on the ground. What has been difficult has been connecting fine grained evidence about practice on the ground with hard edged quantitative data. For example, it hasn't been possible to relate the 95% registration rate for Sing Up to the different outcomes explored in the two impact evaluations. What we have been able to do however, is use evidence from substantial reports from directly contracted Sing Up teams that contain and

reflect on a range of both process and impact data, to illustrate these connections for a significant number of cases.

Both the Funded Programmes and Workforce Development strands submitted a substantial proportion of reports of projects engaging in work with young people with special needs of varying kinds, including looked after children. 'Beyond the Mainstream' (BTM) work extended across all strands of the Sing Up programme and funding was ringfenced for BTM work from 2008 and, possibly as a result of this ringfencing, is particularly thoroughly documented. So the BTM focus is reflected in the data used for all the theme reports.

2. Overall Impacts of the Sing Up Programme by Group

2.1 Children and Young people as Participants and Audience

The key outcomes for this group across the programme related to their musical learning and development, to positive impacts on their confidence and enjoyment, and to improvements in engagement and enjoyment.

Musical Learning and Development

The Welch³ report identified clear advances in children's singing during the first three years of the Sing Up programme. This was exemplified and illustrated in the theme reports. In terms of musical learning and development, there is a huge variety and complexity including the hard-won steps made by the children and young people who got engaged with singing for the first time. Alongside were the experienced singers from choirs, for example, whose musical advancement was described more in terms of technical skills: 'notable improvements in pitch and accuracy', for example, or 'excellent standards, with good pitch control, high levels in unaccompanied singing and two part singing'.

In between, technical skills and knowledge covered a broad range. Examples from projects across the Sing Up programme included the following:

- Looked after children learned to sing in tune, in key and on time
- Early years children could count the first five notes of a major scale and learned to differentiate between high and low, loud and quiet, fast and slow
- Key Stage two children learned major scales and harmonies, acquired an understanding of musical terms such as tempo, beat, melody, harmony, bass line, counter melody, legato, crescendo, diminuendo
- Young people gained the ability to see their weak and strong points as singers and developed their timing, harmonies and pitching
- Autistic children and children with challenging behaviours developed their abilities to sing songs as well as engage in song writing

3. Welch, et al (2010) Researching the impact of the national singing programme Sing Up in England. Main findings from the first three years (2007-2010).

- Musical learning encompassed singing specific notes, rhythm development, volume control, pitch, use of equipment, breathing and composition
- Listening skills, blending, balancing and memorising were part of the learning for all children

Other areas of musical learning and development included song writing, particularly collaborative song writing, linked to song recall. Song construction, lyric writing, rhyme and imagery were identified as key components of musical learning related to song writing. Learning and/or devising musical warm ups was a particular feature of musical learning for singing leaders; but also singled out by young participants as an area of singing they particularly enjoyed.

Enjoyment, Engagement, Confidence and Wellbeing

Increased confidence was consistently reported as an outcome for children across the different projects analysed in the theme reports, irrespective of strand⁴ or theme. It was also a significant outcome from the Welch report. The IOE survey evaluation of the Workforce Development strand found that teachers reported positive impacts on their students' confidence. It appears from the experiences of the Sing Up programme that advances in musical learning and development go hand in hand with affective developments such as increases in confidence and enjoyment.

Related outcomes across the different projects analysed in the theme reports included:

- improved self-esteem (particularly for vulnerable and special needs children whose behaviour and performance in school generally improved);
- children enjoying coming to school more and enjoyment of singing sessions by both boys and girls; and
- development of pupils' social skills and greater social cohesion (vulnerable children in particular found security in singing in groups, enabling them to make new friends, share thoughts and life experiences, discover common ground and have fun together).

These outcomes were particularly noticeable for young people involved in BTM projects.

Starting Point (GMMAZ) and Pie Factory leaders described their goals – for the Sing Up projects and their settings in general – in a very similar way: helping vulnerable young people develop skills they lack through providing them with access to singing and music. Both settings aimed to develop their pupils' confidence and ability to communicate with others.

'It's not about [child participant] becoming a singing leader. It's about her developing social awareness, learning not to talk about herself all the time, developing confidence to ask questions if she doesn't understand something'. (Project leader, Pie Factory)

Alongside these social skills, Starting Point had a strong emphasis on basic and life skills. This could be, for example, learning to say and understand the time and then moving on to using a bus timetable. Where possible and particularly for older children and young people, Pie Factory tried to equip them with skills such as perseverance, time management and problem-solving, and develop the right attitude for working environment. It supported young people to gain accreditation, such as Arts Awards (Sing Up Probe Report).

Cross-curricular Learning

The outcomes for children described in the theme reports included those relating to enhanced learning and engagement with the curriculum in general, as well as those relating to the particular curriculum areas of English, maths and modern foreign languages (MFL). Learning benefits common to most of the theme reports included:

- greater recall of facts and ideas;
- deeper engagement with the curriculum;
- improvements in maths and literacy skills; and
- development of speaking and listening skills.

Other more targeted outcomes in different projects included:

- improved communication and language skills, especially notable amongst children with special needs or not in mainstream education;
- better concentration and memory;
- changing boys' attitudes to participation in singing;
- support for transition from primary to secondary school; and
- improvements in MFL learning and for children with English as an additional language (EAL).

The Sing Up Probe Report highlighted:

Singing in lessons occurred as part of both music and other areas of curriculum. With regards to music lessons, colleagues from one of the primary schools reported that through their involvement with Sing Up there had been an increase in the amount of singing in music lessons. More importantly, from the school's point of view, following the professional development input they received through Sing Up, all the teachers felt able to teach singing and music as opposed to just the music coordinator, as had previously been the case.

It was singing in other curriculum areas though that was most frequently highlighted by school leaders and practitioners in relation to singing in lessons, partly because this was something that has been developed in some of the schools directly through their involvement with Sing Up. Singing was recognised as a tool for supporting learning in curriculum areas such as English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages (MFL) and others.

2.2 Adults as Participants

Across the programme over 60,000 people had been involved in Sing Up's training and development activities by March 2011. Overall, evidence from the projects analysed in the theme reports suggests that the training, CPD sessions, supported classroom practice, and resources:

- built confidence amongst non-specialist teachers to attempt singing and signing with their pupils, leading to an increase in singing activity;
- empowered support staff to lead singing in their school;
- enabled classroom teachers to use singing in a variety of curriculum areas;
- helped singing to become embedded in schools – used in teaching different subjects, in assemblies, in the playground; and
- resulted in new extra-curricular singing activities (taking place at lunchtime etc).

The 1000+ people who responded to the IOE Workforce Development evaluation survey⁵ identified two main benefits: an increase in participants' self confidence as vocal leaders, and an appreciation of the provision of teaching materials to support the teaching of singing in schools. They were positive about having access to a peer support network amongst fellow professionals.

Confidence

Increased confidence in their own ability to sing and their ability to teach others to sing was reported by practitioners and their singing leaders across the programme. In BTM projects where technology was involved, teachers and trainers also increased their confidence to use and adapt the technological resources with young people.

Particularly noticeable from the theme reports was the frequency with which teachers who had previously had little or no singing experience and those who had previously had poor experiences of singing and little or no confidence, reported increases in their confidence.

Individual teachers who had been 'scared of singing' became confident and able to engage and enjoy using their singing voice and teach and enjoy music. This applied equally as much to the graduates from the PGCE programme with Sing Up modules as to the practising teachers after their Sing Up training.

In BTM settings teachers also found that, through their projects aimed at introducing and increasing singing opportunities that were highly personalised to young people's needs and backgrounds, they had increased their own confidence in dealing with student behaviour, looked after children or with particular special educational needs (SEN) issues.

Singing Knowledge and Skills

Participants improved their own singing knowledge and skills and their ability to teach these to young people.

Core to the acquisition of new knowledge was learning new songs, song games and warm up exercises to help introduce singing in the classroom. Teachers learned how to compose songs and create their own resources. They learned new skills in teaching song writing – including breaking it down into segments. Music skills included learning how to sing and how to use their voices creatively. In terms of specific musical skills, non-specialist practitioners acquired basic repertoire and the musical skills for the early stages of music teaching using their singing voice. They learned about their singing voices and their own vocal development, about singing in harmony and music elements such as pitch, rhythm, pulse and structure. They also developed skills in listening, thinking, memorising, musical vocabulary and the appropriate use of instruments, and developed their understanding of the musical learning process and the progression of skills.

Changed attitudes to SEN was a particular feature of BTM projects, as were skills in using and applying new technology as a key tool for enabling student participation in singing. Teachers learnt skills for making singing accessible to students with communication difficulties and were more able to see the musical potential of disabled students. They increased their knowledge and understanding of using singing to promote speech and language development.

2.3 Adults as Trainers

It was clear from the evidence across the programme that their experiences of supporting or leading Sing Up had had a considerable impact on workshop leaders, project trainers and other specialists. This included:

- their own musical skills and knowledge;
- developing understanding and knowledge of working in different settings, especially schools;
- developing skills and knowledge of working with larger numbers of trainees;
- increased understanding and awareness of the benefits of singing for SEN students;
- developing skills and knowledge about working with different (especially

younger) age groups;

- developing skills and knowledge in cross-curricular approaches;
- enjoyment and engagement; and
- career progression.

These impacts are well illustrated in the individual theme reports. Trainers reported examples of integrating their music training with activities, learning and behaviour development already taking place in schools. They adapted their usual ways of working to fit the rhythms and priorities of the school environments and learned new ways of working in the process. They also learned how to create new approaches to workshop delivery and to resource development. The latter emerged most notably in SEN settings, particularly in technological innovations with deaf children. Working with professionals from other domains (e.g. mental health) had an impact on the trainers' professional knowledge, skills and values. Inspiration and motivation for the trainers was stimulated in many instances by the impact they saw that they were making on the lives of the young participants.

Specific pedagogical issues learned or reported by trainers included:

- ensuring the repertoire was right for the teacher/age group;
- new repertoire should be introduced regularly or the children get bored;
- world music worked well (teachers sometimes struggled with the language, but the children picked it up well);
- composition and repertoire should not be separated but used together;
- composition can use subject material relevant to the teacher, class or chosen curriculum area;
- instrumental backing tracks (that just require the addition of words) and familiar tunes (such as nursery rhymes) are useful tools; and
- accompaniment does make the composition process easier, but introduces the need for a musician.

2.4 Young Singing Leaders

The two key areas which emerged from the theme reports in terms of the impact of Sing Up on children and young people as singing leaders were social and emotional learning, and skills and knowledge development. There was also evidence of positive impact on boys' attitudes to singing and their increased participation.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning had been identified by Sing Up from the outset as a key area for development as a result of engaging young people as leaders. This was particularly evident from the experiences of the choir leaders and in the cluster projects. Working with children from other schools had a positive effect on young people's social development. It created positive messages for boys about singing and gave young people increased understanding and empathy with other children.

Maturity and self esteem seemed to follow increased responsibility as singing leaders, particularly notable for young people from challenging social backgrounds. Young people felt more confident to lead, often, they felt, because they had acquired better musical knowledge as a result of their training.

Skills and Knowledge

Young Singing Leaders learnt about teaching. As they developed their own musical knowledge they also learnt about factors that need consideration when leading singing with young children – including how to choose the appropriate song for particular age groups, appropriate posture, strategies for interactivity and conducting music. Amongst the other leadership skills they learned were:

- learning how to encourage children whilst keeping them interested;
- communication skills; and
- patience.

Progression

In a few cases the project had enthused young singing leaders to train to become teachers themselves, or to continue their musical development in education.

3. Cross-Programme Processes

Approaches and activities which were adopted (and adapted) varied in detail from project to project. But there appeared from the theme reports to be some important consistencies in the overall programme approach:

- A central bank of differentiated resources, tailored to programme objectives and by participant feedback
- A public face for the programme presented through, for example:
 - the website;
 - regular communications for participants (for example via the magazine);
 - regular communications for trainers and leaders (via regular written updates and national, local and regional events); and
 - media campaigns.
- A listening approach and the flexibility to adapt and target training and resources on the basis of feedback and research

- Collaboration and partnership
- Cross fertilisation between trainers, other professionals and school practitioners
- Performance
- Awards and accreditation
- Training and professional development (see below)

Workforce development was an integral part of every project. The training programme varied between projects, but there were some discernible trends across the programme as a whole:

- Creating opportunities for peer to peer learning
- Supporting and enabling networking
- Sustaining learning over time
- Providing in-school support, including modelling and coaching
- Producing, using and/or developing project-specific resources as part of professional development activities
- Differentiating training according to practitioners' musical knowledge and confidence
- Responding to teachers' needs – particularly in terms of the timing and location of the professional development inputs
- Joint planning with setting practitioners – schools or SEN settings, for example
- ICT training

4. Organisational Learning

4.1 Sing Up Leadership Learning

Much of the learning reported by Sing Up Area Leaders and project leaders in the projects underpinning the theme reports was specific to particular projects. Across the theme reports however it was possible to identify several key learning points for the programme as a whole:

- The need to anticipate and work with the rhythms and constraints of schools
- The need to collaborate closely with different professionals working in SEN environments

- The importance of developing specific strategies for teaching and working with young people – such as keeping them motivated
- Sustainability – the need to embed approaches across schools and settings
- Sustainability – the need for clear guidelines and/or toolkits to enable other lead organisations, schools or individual practitioners to continue the development of Sing Up after March 2011
- Responsiveness and being prepared to alter or abandon preparations and plans in response to participant feedback
- Consultation and the need to work as equal partners with co-deliverers, professional advisors or teachers
- Practical issues such as effective timetabling and clear, workable communication structures
- An emphasis on building and sustaining motivation – for trainers as well as participants

It was evident from the experiences of the Sing Up website and the Awards programme that online provision and interactivity needs to be compatible both with the kinds of technology which schools have at their disposal, and of the varying levels of IT expertise within schools.

4.2 School Impact and Organisational Learning

Impacts on schools are hard to track, requiring as they do a wide range of evidence at many different levels and points in time. There are many different, dynamically interactive variables to take into account. Consequently, Sing Up reports contain rather less evidence about whole school impact than they do about impacts for pupils and adult participants, for example. Nonetheless schools and projects have both reported strong perceptions about impacts often in the context of organisational learning. The focus of perceived impacts varied. Some related to the potential of singing for learning across the curriculum, particularly as many of the songs in the Song Bank had been especially tailored towards different curriculum areas. Several schools in the project reports cited improvements in literacy and numeracy in particular.

A significant outcome for some schools was the improvement in the quality of singing and music teaching. Through their involvement in Sing Up school staff developed their own musical prowess and their knowledge of education, with the result that their teaching in this area improved.

A number of schools reported that their involvement in Sing Up had contributed to a successful Ofsted inspection particularly when Ofsted singled out their approach to singing in the context of achievement more generally.

Many schools noted the impact of Sing Up on their ethos and culture. This ranged from improvements in relationships and greater engagement in learning to singing in the playground during breaks. It also generated conversation and peer engagement amongst staff, improving the school learning culture.

Projects in many schools gathered their own momentum: confident teachers influenced others and strong singing lifted other members of staff. Staff enjoyed bouncing ideas off one another and comparing notes, thus generating conversation, interest and engagement. Seeing a positive outcome resulting from singing gave teachers a reason to use singing again and again. Positive outcomes included enjoyment (their own or the children's), improved learning, improved engagement, or a new found ability to put something across more easily to greater effect.

Support for participation in Sing Up from school leaders was found by several of the projects in the theme reports to be an important ingredient for success.

'One leader commented that teachers have always had to collect evidence for things like literacy and numeracy, and the Sing Up Awards reminded them how important it is to record and celebrate arts and cultural activities as well'

Challenges in working with schools faced by the musical leaders included poor communication between management and teachers. Information wasn't disseminated down to teachers when sent to management, meaning that teachers were regularly unaware of information and decisions that had been made. Requiring all teachers to attend training sessions resulted in some teachers feeling disgruntled, which split the group into those teachers who found the sessions useful and those who did not. Politics among the practitioners and the teachers could make it a difficult working environment.

It appeared from the internal evaluations that most schools did not start their engagement with Sing Up with any clear baseline data or pupil targets in mind. Those that applied for the Awards programme were subsequently obliged by Sing Up to consider the quantity, quality and impact of singing in their organisation and beyond. This did raise awareness of the importance of charting and recording developments and achievements. One leader commented that teachers have always had to collect evidence for things like literacy and numeracy, and the Sing Up Awards reminded them how important it is to record and celebrate arts and cultural activities as well.

4.3 Partnership and Organisational Learning

All activity in the Sing Up programme was delivered through partnership. Leading structural partners were Youth Music, Faber Music, The Sage Gateshead and Abbott Mead Vickers.

Contractors were engaged to form their own partnerships to deliver training or manage projects on Sing Up's behalf, and were expected to work closely with Sing Up. Through an extensive network of Area Leaders, Sing Up forged partnerships with groups of schools and many projects forged close working relationships with community agencies such as Sure Start or local councils. Project leaders liaised with police forces, independent children's organisations, and LA services for the elderly, to access hard-to-reach groups.

Projects analysed for the theme reports emphasised the importance of ensuring that schools they worked with were full partners, in the sense that activities were jointly planned. In some cases, however, projects had to experiment with different approaches – such as playground singing – to get schools involved as active partners.

Beyond schools, arts organisations, parents and local authorities, partnerships were established with commercial organisations such as the Participating Retailers scheme.

Project leaders in some of the theme reports made it clear that much groundwork in relationship building was required in the early phases if the partnership was going to be sustained and productive. Other lessons learned from the experiences of projects analysed in the theme reports included:

- the importance of both diagnostic and evaluation activities with school partners to make the learning more visible and to increase commitment;
- aligning the focus of the project with the partner's priorities;
- the need to plan alternative approaches to take account of cultural differences;
- running project activities within school time, as a way of engaging more teachers;
- the importance of engaging key individuals (e.g. head teachers) in partnership activities;
- planning for and managing staff turnover in order to sustain the partnership; and
- joint planning and development or adaptation of resources.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Sing Up involved a very substantial programme which was well resourced across all of its strands. Perhaps the two most distinctive features of the infrastructure were the involvement of a specialist media organisation as a partner in the coalition which delivered the programme, and the comprehensive approach to training and professional development. This meant, on the one hand, a commitment to marketing and using marketing models to secure reach and responsiveness; and on the other a commitment to professional development to secure the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to secure genuine transfer and scaling up of practice on the ground.

CPD and Professional Learning

There is substantial evidence from research and practice to reinforce the effectiveness of this dual approach. We know, for example, from research into transferring and scaling up new practice⁶, that spread alone will not secure deep and lasting transfer of practice. Teachers need to own and understand the underpinning principles of any new intervention in order to adapt it for use in their own contexts. The emphasis on professional learning evidenced in many of the projects analysed for the theme reports is consistent with this. For example, WFD trainers reported paying attention to starting where the teachers were, both in their musical knowledge and skills and in their confidence in their own singing and ability to teach singing.

6.Cordingley, P., & Bell, M. (2007) *Transferring learning and taking innovation to scale*. London: The Innovation Unit.

Other aspects of the CPD design in many of the projects analysed in the theme reports were consistent with best evidence about teacher professional development^{7 8}. Specifically, these were:

7.<http://www.curee-paccts.com/our-projects/eppi-centre-systematic-reviews-continuing-professional-development>

8.Timperley, H (2008) *Teacher professional learning and development*. International Academy of Education, Brussels, and International Bureau of Education, Geneva

- collaboration – including peer support;
- networking – opportunities for participants to share knowledge and expertise, and to meet and learn from musical specialists;
- specialist support – training and support from music specialists;
- sustaining the learning over time; and
- modelling and in-school support.

Where singing was embedded, teachers worked together on collaborative development of their practice.

In Wylam First School, colleagues highlighted the importance of having two members of staff who were co-leading whole school singing activities, supported by a committed and passionate about singing parent volunteer. Not only could they discuss, for example repertoire and approaches to teaching singing, they could also co-deliver an assembly or a choir session, supporting different groups of children when singing parts or harmonies and modelling different singing styles (Sing Up Probe Report).

Tools and Resources for Generalists

Other aspects of the approach to promoting singing are supported by the wider evidence base. Research⁹ found that certain elements seemed to be important components of singing based interventions, irrespective of the context or aims. These elements included:

Sing Up Literature Review (2011)

- 'Effective use of tools and resources, including guidance in their selection and use according to the developmental needs of the young people
- Training class teachers in primary school for delivering singing because they have better knowledge of their pupils than itinerant specialists

- Effective use of technology'

'The tools and resources provided by Sing Up, in particular those in the Song Bank, were the subject of much positive feedback from participants in the programme, which targeted generalist teachers in order to boost their skills and confidence whilst generating enthusiasm for singing. In effect the tools lengthened the arms of the programme specialists enabling singing to remain alive in learning settings even when the external specialists withdrew'

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The Sing Up website and magazine were the two most frequently mentioned types of resources. The value of the website was consistently praised by school practitioners and music professionals alike. An ability to use the Song Bank resources without being a music specialist or a confident singer was frequently highlighted as a key factor resulting in music being more embedded in the case study schools:

'... all the staff really used the Song Bank. That was the thing that made the difference' (Sing Up Probe Report).

Technology was used to good effect in some of the BTM projects. It was also part of a key learning curve for the programme leaders, particularly in relation to the Awards schools, many of whom had either limited technological knowledge or limited ICT resources. This resulted in substantial adjustments to the tools and platforms involved.

Sing Up provided a handbook detailing the benefits of engaging young people as singing leaders and the ways in which this could be achieved. A booklet was also devised for the young singing leaders themselves, to enable them to take responsibility for their learning and allow reflection. Schools and partners added to these resources in their own contexts.

Transition

Evidence from the projects analysed in the theme reports suggests that they engaged large numbers of children from different phases and contexts in singing, which led to increased confidence and enjoyment of life in school. On the other hand, case study research highlighted this as a potentially challenging area: [in one of the settings], involving KS3-4 staff proved difficult due to their lack of belief that singing could be relevant and engaging in the secondary classroom. Interestingly, pupils we interviewed also noticed that as they got older, there were fewer songs that could truly help their learning in different curriculum areas, compared to EYFS and KS1(Sing Up Probe Report).

Development of student peer support mechanisms (young singing leaders, singing buddies) features in many projects. Opportunities to meet staff and visit new schools before transition were built in to some projects. The latter two approaches are consistent with what has been identified as facilitating transition in other studies^{10 11 12}. Other effective strategies evidenced in some of the reports and supported by research were:

10. Evangelou, M., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. and Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). What makes a successful transition from Primary to Secondary School? DCSF: London. Accessible at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-RR019>

11. Peters, S. (2003) 'I didn't expect that I would get tons of friends ... More each day': children's experiences of friendship during the transition to school. In *Early Years*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2003, pp.45-53.

12. CUREE & University of Wolverhampton (2010) How do effective curriculum experiences contribute to narrowing achievement gaps for the most vulnerable children and young people? Coventry: CUREE

- visits to schools by prospective teachers, children and their parents; and
- talks and performances at the schools.

Work aimed at securing coherence of learning experiences between two key stages appeared less common.

Student Learning

Approaches to children's own learning shares some of the features highlighted by research evidence, in particular from research on students' motivation to learn¹³. Students believed they were better motivated when curriculum experiences:

- were perceived as fun;
- were varied and participative; and
- involved collaboration

In all the projects, particularly where singing was used across the curriculum, there was evidence of the enjoyment young people felt. The nature of most of the Youth Leadership projects in particular, especially those focused on transition, meant that the young people collaborated with each other and sometimes with teachers to learn effective ways of working with children. Similarly, the strategies employed by all sites were by their nature participative, involving young people in singing and in leading singing groups themselves.

In schools where singing was embedded, such as Sing Up Gold and Platinum Awards schools (Joseph Hood Primary and Wylam First), pupils themselves were very articulate in reflecting on the progress they make year on year, by participating in their school choir and other singing activities offered by their schools. In particular they commented on their improved ability to:

- learn songs, highlighting speed and ease of learning melodies and tunes;
- remember the lyrics even when long and complicated, or in other languages;
- understand the meaning of even previously known songs;
- sing in parts and harmonies;
- sing 'accurately', referring to pitch and tone, holding high/low and long notes;
- clearly pronounce individual sounds and words, including when singing a fast song;
- use movements and acting when singing.

Both pupils and staff emphasised that, more importantly perhaps, children 'would sing anywhere': in lessons and in the playground, when walking home and on a coach, and at home – with their friends and family (Sing Up Probe Report).

13. Smith, C., et al. (2005) A systematic review of what pupils aged 11–16 believe impacts on their motivation to learn in the classroom. London: EPPI-Centre Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

'The Sing Up literature review highlighted the importance of 'devising ways of measuring success'

Some Implications

‘It therefore seems that, those wishing to develop the speech, language and communication skills of children and young people should strongly consider using singing activities to support this development. Attention to ensuring pupils’ progression in musical learning and development at the next key stage, allowing them to build on what they know and can do already, was rare’

- There is specific evidence that music is strongly linked with **speech, language and communication development** including the learning of foreign languages . The projects in this report illustrate improvements in this area for children in a variety of settings. Particular benefits were noted for those learning English as an additional language and for children with special educational needs. It therefore seems that, those wishing to develop the speech, language and communication skills of children and young people should strongly consider using singing activities to support this development.
- Attention to ensuring pupils’ progression in musical learning and development at the next key stage, allowing them to build on what they know and can do already, was rare. This indicates that sustaining momentum of learning and engagement, including **developing progression mechanisms for transition** stages (particularly children moving into secondary school), supported by relevant and targeted staff development opportunities, could be suggested as an area for development for policy and practice related to singing and musical provision.
- The potential for **partnerships to contribute to improving transition experiences** is an interesting area for further exploration in regard to transition. While there was information to suggest primary and secondary schools were working in the same partnership, there was very little reported in the projects analysed for the theme reports on the nature of their relationship with each other. What was the role of schools in the partnerships? What does continuity in singing progression from primary to secondary look like? What other ways might the increased sharing of information that flowed from Sing Up partnerships have fed back into improving practice, learning and the life changes of young people?
- There was more evidence in the projects analysed for the theme reports of the processes used to develop learning across the curriculum than for the specific impact on children’s learning. The Sing Up literature review highlighted the importance of **‘devising ways of measuring success’**. It may be that those wishing to develop singing as a learning tool across the curriculum, or for specific targets such as speech and communication, may wish to consider specifically what success would look like for young people from the start of a new project or development and the ways in which evidence about that can be used to refine ongoing development.
- Some BTM projects made innovative use of old technologies such as microphones as well as developing new technologies. Those wishing to develop speech, language and communication through singing in either BTM or mainstream settings may wish to consider their use of technology in the classroom.
- Many components of the professional development and training delivered in Sing Up are consistent with best evidence about effective CPD that has positive impacts on students’ learning. What was missing from the mix (at

‘The potential for partnerships to contribute to improving transition experiences is an interesting area for further exploration in regard to transition’

‘What was missing from the mix (at least from the data included in the theme reports) was the use of structured dialogue between professionals, rooted in evidence about student learning’

least from the data included in the theme reports) was the use of structured dialogue between professionals, rooted in evidence about student learning. It may be that the inclusion of this element in further programmes would make a focus on progression easier and clearer. It would also help teachers integrate their growing knowledge about singing into their models and understanding of young people’s learning.

The evidence about effective transfer and scaling up of good practice involves a number of essential elements:

- Goal and purpose – how much change is involved, of what kind?
- Depth – or transfer of practice, knowledge, beliefs and understanding of the principles and values
- Spread – numbers or volume
- Extent of ownership
- Degree of sustainability

‘The range, tailoring and adaptability of the tools, mediated through CPD to build ownership, were a key aspect of the programme. Other large-scale initiatives may do well to learn from this approach’

Large scale interventions rarely succeed in paying attention to all these dimensions, particularly in their approach to creating ownership of the intervention. The Sing Up programme paid considerable attention to ownership building – through soliciting and listening to feedback and overall responsiveness to participants’ needs, for example. The most significant way in which ownership of the programme developed was through resources. The range, tailoring and adaptability of the tools, mediated through CPD to build ownership, were a key aspect of the programme. Other large-scale initiatives may do well to learn from this approach.

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.