



Bentley West Primary School Singing Strategy

REVISED September 2026

Introduction

In the National Plan for Music Education the Government has set core roles¹ for schools (supported by the local Music Hubs) to ensure national consistency and equality of opportunity in music including singing. Bentley West Primary School wishes singing to be an important part of our music curriculum and it will have a high profile in our development plans. We shall aim to give quality access to singing to all pupils and to offer/signpost clear pathways for progression. We will work closely with the local Music Hub, MusE, the local community and a range of other providers to achieve our aims

Background

Developing a confident and skilled workforce is key to achieving the successful implementation of Bentley West Primary School's singing strategy. We are already connected through Walsall's MusE² network, which helps support our teachers and our singing curriculum. We have a strong, active and embedded singing offer.

Our Governors, Senior Leadership and classroom teachers recognise the value of singing and provide active support for its place in the broad curriculum. The school is aware, however, that more strategic work will be needed to further support the implementation of our Singing Strategy. To aid sustainability it will be important that singing leadership in our school does not fall exclusively to the music specialist. Singing can best be embedded in our school when all (or the majority) of teachers are active in developing their delivery skills, understand how to use singing resources and receive appropriate support/CPD for leading singing. For singing to thrive we aim to have singing happening in individual classrooms, in year groups, in key stages, in assemblies and, where possible, throughout the whole school.

It is important that we sensitively address widening teacher participation in the delivery of singing and that staff are encouraged, supported and challenged appropriately. Sustainable approaches to foster wider teacher engagement might include:

- providing singing leadership, mentoring and performance opportunities (both within school and possibly within flagship projects e.g. *Young Voices*, Walsall singing festival)
- Having a singing in-school "buddy" who can offer mentoring, resource ideas and potential collaboration within the school. ("Buddies" can be any "singing-confident" colleague willing to support less confident colleagues in delivering singing).
- Support newly qualified staff, and other staff new to the school, by providing appropriate CPD/mentoring
- Teachers/ support staff supporting music specialist within music lessons
- Involvement of teachers/ support staff in choir.

¹ The core roles of the National Plan for Music are presented in Appendix A

² MusE is facilitated by the Music Hub and is the local network and forum of music teachers in Walsall

We will:

- Provide teachers with appropriate singing resources
- Provide a programme of support for our teachers when needed
- Promote (including to parents) the evidence base that makes the case for how singing can support and enhance the wider curriculum and pupil achievement
- Explore where singing can support other subjects or be embedded within other subject areas
- Ensure that our Singing Strategy works to highlight the importance of singing in supporting mental awareness, concentration, listening and memory development³ for all, and especially for engaging boys, SEND and those with little access to other forms of music making.

The Aims of Our Singing Strategy:

- To provide a coordinated, sustainable and cost effective approach to developing singing and supporting vocal opportunities for children, teachers and the wider community
- To develop models of working with teachers, teaching assistants and others which embeds singing in the cultural life of our school
- To signpost children to singing initiatives and opportunities which are provided at a borough-wide, regional and national level.
- To provide information so that children, their parents and classroom teachers know about and can access the most appropriate offer at local, regional and national level
- To develop and maintain links with the wider vocal community locally, regionally and nationally
- To regularly review, refine and develop this strategy's model for embedding singing in the cultural life of our school through taking into account the views of stakeholders, e.g.
 - Headteachers
 - Parents
 - Class teachers and teaching assistants
 - Partner organisations
- To access a network of partnerships that provide training, increase confidence and enhance vocal leadership skills for all teachers
- To support (and use) networks of local primary teachers to act as local "champions"
- To identify and partner with the widest possible "talent pool" of deliverers and facilitators

³ See Appendix A "10 Reasons Why Everyone Should Sing!"

To Realise the Above Aims the School Will:

- Develop, in collaboration with the local Music Hub and MusE, protocols & documentation for embedding singing within our school e.g.
 - Self-Assessment toolkit:
 - Model delivery plan for the delivery of the Singing Strategy
 - Accessing awards and accreditation for schools' vocal commitment and expertise
 - Incorporating singing in yearly music development plans
 - Regularly reviewing curriculum to ensure progression and development of singing skills
- Develop, in collaboration with the local Music Hub and MusE, resource access for teachers e.g.
 - Charanga access facilitated through the Music Hub
 - On-line access to strategic documentation
 - Resource packages to support large-scale “themed” events (e.g. *Young Voices*, *Singing Festival*.)
- Provide access to targeted CPD for improving the quality of singing e.g.
 - CPD for teachers built into some large-scale “themed” events (e.g. *School Production*, *School Concert*, *Annual Vocal Festival*, *Young Voices*, *Christmas Stars* etc.)
 - Training a class choir
 - Creative vocal parts – simple counter melodies, partner singing
 - Repertoire - including non-Western and playground singing
 - Warm ups and games
 - Supporting music lead in singing assemblies.

To Support the Delivery of High Quality Singing the School Will:

Provide:

- Regular participatory events, where children and young people can come together and sing on a larger scale, and where they can interact with other schools, artists and art forms
- The opportunity for collaborative performance opportunities within the school, Trust, and other “communities of interest” to include community performances
- Large-scale opportunities to sing as a whole school (e.g. Carol Service at Christmas, Walsall Harmony project, etc).
- Targeted CPD
- Resource access and support for singing (e.g. subscribe to the Sing Up resource base)
- Access to and support for the Charanga resource base
- Access to courses (provided by local music hub, minimuSe network, annual music conferences)

(Appendix A)

From the National Plan for Music Education

The Government core roles for schools and Music Hubs

These core roles are to:

- Ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than voice) through whole-class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument
- Provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage.
- Ensure that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people.

- Develop a singing strategy to ensure that every pupil sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available in the area.

10 REASONS WHY EVERYONE SHOULD SING!

- 1. It's good for your heart;** Singing is an aerobic activity so beneficial for your heart and lungs. You'll probably live longer, in general. A 2008 joint study by Harvard and Yale stated that choral singing in a Connecticut town had increased residents' life expectancy.
 - 2. It's really good for your brain and will enhance your mental awareness, concentration, and memory;** Reading sheet music in general improves your math skills, as well as other cognitive functions. When you sing your brain also releases "feel-good" chemicals including endorphins. Consequently singing can be a brilliantly effective mood buster and there is an increasing body of research to show that it is a valuable tool in alleviating depression.
 - 3. It's relaxing;** Through singing we can learn to breathe more deeply and with more awareness. When stressed or anxious, exhaling for longer than inhaling helps to calm the nervous system. Singing encourages us to do this, using a shorter inhalation and a longer outward breath.
 - 4. Express yourself;** Singing is a natural and global form of human expression. You don't have to consider yourself good at singing for singing to be good for you. It is something that the vast majority of us can participate in and benefit from socially, physically or psychologically, and usually all three.
 - 5. It builds confidence;** Singing regularly can improve your ability to use your speaking voice with more clarity and confidence too.
 - 6. It makes you part of something life-affirming;** Joining a choir and singing with other people can be rewarding and fun. It can also enhance your sense of community, connection and creativity.
 - 7. It's a natural beauty treatment;** When you sing you exercise your facial muscles. (Not important for the kids, but great for the grown ups!)
 - 8. It's eco-friendly;** Your body already has all of the equipment you need and you don't require fossil fuels or expensive upgrades.
 - 9. You reclaim your birthright;** Children sing very easily, freely and without feeling self-conscious. Sometimes, as we grow up or experience judgement and criticism, the simple pleasure of singing can get lost. There are many accounts of people being told that they "can't sing."
- We can all learn to sing with more confidence, freedom and control through guidance and practice. While our individual physicality undoubtedly shapes and defines our voice, we can learn to use more of our vocal potential and sing with a greater expressive range, no matter how old or young we are.
- 10. You'll become a better listener;** By learning to sing, you develop your musical ear and start to listen to yourself and other singers with a greater level of appreciation and understanding. You learn to hear more nuance and subtlety in vocal performances and in music itself as well as being able to listen with more concentration in general.