



A Whole School Approach to Singing Greenfields Community School

These are some of our key principles and approaches to singing, which enable us to be a singing school. This has been built up by a team of teachers over a long time and their legacy continues. To build a singing culture is a wonderful thing.

- All pupils have **singing lessons in groups of 30-60** to enable them to learn to sing in tune and gain confidence in using their voices to sing
- **All Staff** learn and support alongside the children, taking part, helping to lead and spotting stars of the lesson.
- **Singing as a whole school** is important to children and staff, for well-being and to celebrate our sense of community. We have a joint repertoire of songs which include songs in a range of languages and styles, suitable for all ages, 3-11. Pupils remember the songs they sang in foundation and are very happy to sing them when we all come together to enable the younger pupils to join in with confidence, as well as taking the lead in more complex songs or harmonies.
- **Stars of the Lesson.** All staff spot one or two pupils to praise each lesson, giving reasons. A record of these is kept to make sure that all pupils are engaged and supported to achieve each term.
- **Pupil leaders of all ages.** Pupils are invited to take a lead role at the front, both in singing lessons and whole school singing, being brave, acting as role models and having fun! This can be leading actions, parts in a round or call & response songs, with staff support where needed.
- **The body is our instrument** – simple warm ups before singing loosen up the body and release tension. We try to work on not just what to sing but how to sing and what we can do to enable us to sing with more accuracy, confidence and expression.
- **Space to sing.** In EYFS and Key Stage One, we use our whole bodies to sing at times, with story songs, actions and playground songs to develop our muscles, our interaction and to support our developing balance and sense of pulse and rhythm. In Key Stage Two, we have lessons in height order, to enable us to stand to sing and move around, with less confident singers supported by more confident singers.
- **Adapting songs to make them suitable for young singers.** The key range for primary age students is B-B or C-C with an extension of a few lower or higher notes from G up to around D, depending on the song. Making sure that songs are at a comfortable pitch and suitable tempo allows pupils to sing well. Some pop songs are written for the male or adult voice and need to be adapted for children to sing. **Free downloadable software such as audacity** can change the pitch and tempo of songs and backings.
- **Singing in a wide range of styles and languages** is important to us. It fosters a welcoming and open attitude and a willingness to learn new things. It reflects the variety of languages and culture of our diverse community, enabling us to share our language skills and musical knowledge and to feel 'seen' and valued.

- **British Sign Language.** Using BSL gives an added dimension to some of our songs, making the meaning clear and visible. It also enables older pupils to join in actions with a dual purpose, whilst moving their bodies to allow breath to flow.
- **Songs with meaningful links to topics** and **songs from productions** enable us to learn as we sing, engaging pupils and giving us opportunities to act or perform a wider range of emotions, such as anger or sadness or to express a character!
- **Positive role models.** We listen to and watch a wide range of singers from all over the world and from different periods in history, linked to our curriculum topics. All staff regularly join in the singing and we have singing staff meetings to bring us together and gain confidence. Male role models singing either at their own pitch or using falsetto to match the younger children, or accompanying on instruments are valuable in encouraging us all to sing.
- **Call & Response.** Listening with concentration is crucial to learning to sing in tune with accuracy and expression. Staff and pupils model a wide range of warm up sounds and call & response to focus our attention and improve our listening, before singing together. This supports pupils' confidence in sharing their voices, individually or in small groups.
- **Questioning and discussion,** regarding the meaning of the song, the history, or musical features, help us to understand why we sing as well as improving our accuracy through focussed listening. It gives reluctant singers a way to succeed.
- **Pitched percussion & djembe accompaniment!** Learning to play a tune on pitched percussion, or a rhythmic accompaniment gives some pupils a way into singing. Singing the note names, whilst playing is a quick way to improve accuracy and remember which notes to play.
- **High aspirations & Performance opportunities.** There has been an expectation for many years that all pupils perform at least twice a year – including as part of a class assembly for parents. This allows each class to choose a couple of songs, linked to their topic or from the school repertoire that they enjoy and to make it their own. Performing to an audience is a great occasion, and every child gets support to raise their confidence and succeed. Staff practise with their classes in between weekly singing lessons.
- **The school choir** is aspirational and performs regularly inside and outside school. It is open to all singers in years 5 & 6 who work hard in singing lessons, regardless of how 'well' they sing and takes place for half an hour in school time. Pupils get more individual help with pitch, tone and technique and learn more challenging repertoire and harmony parts.
- **Live accompaniment.** This adds another dimension as the children learn to adapt sensitively to things like speed & dynamics without being told. Staff are encouraged to find instruments they may not have played for a while and join in!
- **The Headteacher** values and supports singing events both inside and outside of school, sometimes leading from the front!



EYFS

- **Short songs with repetition** and a **small focused range of pitch from C-G or D-A** with extensions higher and lower.
- **Warm ups for lower, higher and middle ranges.** Soft voices for higher notes
Wriggle lower, Sirens middle, Stretches high
- **Routines** and repetition. Hello song and good bye song
- **Action songs and simple sign language**
- Using bodies to develop muscles and engage the pupils to sing with energy and develop sense of rhythm and beat.
- **Call & Response.** All pupils learn how to take turns, to listen first with focused attention without joining in, and then joining in, which improves their pitch.
- **Pupil leaders for echo songs and actions.** Pupils who understand when to sing the echo, lead the others. Pupils leaders also model actions from front.
- **Clapping rhythms** while singing to engage younger children
- Repeat to reinforce learning but in different ways, using musical language, eg. sing 'a longer / shorter line', sing faster, louder, gently. etc
- Singing louder without shouting! Learning to use singing voices with energy. 'Sing louder than your teacher' or 'sing on your own' often works!
- **Standing up to sing** when we have learnt a song, using whole bodies.
- **Interactive sociable songs or singing games** to encourage reluctant or less confident singers
- **Story songs**
- **Whole school songs.** Singing along with the whole school and having shared repertoire for staff and students right from the beginning

Examples of repertoire

Echo songs

Olele (Lingala – Congo) from [Olélé Moliba Makasi - Berceuse Africaine avec paroles.](#)
Che Che Kule (Ghana)

Call & Response

A Keelie Makolay (Ghana)

[Awonye Nakie - Ghanaian Children's Songs - Ghana - Mama Lisa's World: Children's Songs and Rhymes from Around the World](#)

Short action songs

from Collins / A&C Black books such as Flying A-Round, Banana Splits & Music Express

Four white horses (Jamaica, B. Splits)

Twende Tuka (trad. Tanzania)

I like the Flowers (Flying-a-round)

Country Life (Flying-a-round)

Roll the Ball (Interactive song)

Dipidu (Hello song, Uganda, M Express)

Story Songs

We're going on a bear hunt

Walking in the Jungle (trad)



KS1

- Gradually gaining greater control and accuracy over higher pitches
- Singing in tune with confidence and expression, a wider range of shorter songs, with clear words
- Pupils lead vocal warm up sounds to encourage good listening and pitch matching
- **Using a soft voice for higher sounds**, especially around the 'break' from a lower to a higher voice (around G, A)
- **Starting on higher pitches with a soft voice** and moving lower to gain control and accuracy over the higher range (eg Underneath the Sea, Flying-a-round)
- Coordinating actions or sign language whilst singing a range of longer whole school songs
- Singing in a round
- Pupil leaders for actions and rounds with teacher support, or leading a call & response song individually or in a small group.
- Joining in more complex whole school songs
- Songs linked to topics

Example Repertoire

We continue with some of the known repertoire from EYFS, such as Che Che Kule, Olele Twende Tuka, I like the Flowers & Four white horses but developing greater depth and confidence, or adding rhythmic percussion, for example. Also...

Shorter songs & rounds

Collected in Collins / A&C Black & Voiceworks series (Oxford)

Basketball Rap / Sambalele (VW)

Wimoweh (trad)

Underneath the Sea (Flying-a-round)

I'm Gonna Sing (Gospel Medley)

If you dance (Hungary, Flying-a-round)

Jean Petit (France see MamaLisa.com)

Due Due (Ghana)

Missa Potter (Jamaica, Mango Spice)

Chanda Mama (India / Pakistan, VW)

Longer & Whole School Songs

Popular Songs moved into range B-B or C-C using Audacity, slowed to 93-97 % if needed

Try Everything (Shakira)

We'll Meet Again (Vera Lynn)

Love Shine a Light (Katrina & Waves)

Down by the Riverside (trad)

Stand by Me (Ben E King)

Lean on Me (Bill Withers)

Under the Sea (The Little Mermaid)

If I had a Hammer (Pete Seeger)



KS2 – Years 3&4

- Continuing with pitch focused on an octave B-B, C-C but beginning to extend to higher and lower registers
- Gaining more fluency with tricky intervals such as semitones and leaps, through focused listening
- Leading rounds independently and continuing to sing songs learnt at KS1 for whole school singing, with greater confidence and fluency.
- Confidence with longer topic songs, more words and faster paced
- Greater control of softer tone over wider register
- Greater expression and acting ability – songs from musicals
- Greater understanding in identifying pitch shapes and musical elements in our songs

Examples of Repertoire

Young Rider (Slovakia)

Count on Me (Bruno Mars)

Shalom Chaverim / Salaam, my friend
(Hebrew / Arabic / English)

Just like a Roman (Sing Up)

You are my Brother (Hosanna Rock)

Tut Tut (Egyptians – Glint of Gold
musicline productions)

You've got to pick a pocket (Oliver –
Crime & Punishment)

Song of the Winter Wind (AC Black)

KS2 – Years 5&6

- Building on everything they have done previously and continuing to take part in the whole school repertoire, leading younger singers with encouragement and confidence. Understanding how to be a positive role model, leading rounds with musical understanding, maintaining their own part independently.
- Challenging rounds and call & response songs, keeping parts independently in harmony, or with greater syncopation.
- Understanding aspects of singing technique: thinking of a pitch before singing, focusing on vowels or consonants, breathing for long notes or a crescendo
- Making choices about musical expression, embellishments, dynamics and speed and finding ways to improve our singing.
- Leading more complex call & response songs (eg. Plynie statek) as a class, in small groups or individually
- More complex songs in terms of meaning, historical significance or expression
- Opportunities to explore their own interests through song suggestions, solo singing, student led events and productions.
- Confidence in modelling singing to support the learning
- Accompanying songs on djembe or performing songs on xylophone

Examples of repertoire

Song for the Climate (Bella Ciao)

Senua de dende round (Ghana)

Something Inside So Strong (Siffre)

Believer (Imagine Dragons)

Starman (Bowie – Space)
Cover me in Sunshine (Pink)
Somewhere only we know (Keane)
Touch the Sky (Julie Fowlis)

California Dreaming (harmony)
London is the Place for Me (Lord
Kitchener – Windrush, Black History)
I Look to You (Masala Kids)



Notes on Sources & Useful Websites

AC Black / Collins. All the amazing old books full of timeless songs from around the world such as Flying-a-round, Banana Splits, Mango Spice, Music Express.

Mama Lisa. A good source of traditional songs and translations: [Mama Lisa's World of Children and International Culture](#)

Playing for Change. Fantastic arrangements and videos of popular songs, featuring musicians of all ages and nationalities, with instruments from around the world. Available on youtube. Not always in suitable keys for singing, but great for identifying instruments, introducing a song and inspiring children in the ways music brings us together. For example: [Lean On Me \(Bill Withers\) | Playing For Change | Song Around The World](#)

Sing for the Climate. Climate change awareness to the tune of Bella Ciao. [Sing for the Climate Belgium - Final clip](#)

[bethsnotesplus.com](#) Traditional songs, arrangements, translations and videos from around the world

Audacity free music editing software. Simple to change pitch and tempo and export in mp3 format. [Audacity® | Free Audio editor, recorder, music making and more!](#)

MediaHuman. Safe downloading for music and backings from Youtube: [MediaHuman - multimedia software for macOS, Windows and Linux](#)

Nottingham Music Hub Singing Events. Taking part in these events always brings new and inspiring repertoire and the opportunity to perform in amazing venues around the city!

Greenfields Community School CD's. Live recordings of traditional and popular songs and instrumental music, Greenfields Live 2014, Greenfields in Harmony 2017 & Greenfields Joy 2024.

Contact For any questions, please contact c.jones@greenfields.nottingham.sch.uk or catrinsj@yahoo.co.uk

Lyrics and songs for the Music Network



Olele

(Echo song – Congo with BSL in brackets – Backing & Vocal tracks)

Olele	(row)	
Olele		
Moliba Makasi	(row very hard)	
Moliba Makasi		x 2
Mboka na ye	(river)	
Mboka na ye		
Mboka mboka Kasai		
Mboka mboka Kasai		x 2

Info: When fishing in the Kasai river, people have to row hard in the strong currents. They sing to Benguela, the water spirit to help them. (Source: bethsnotesplus.com)

A Keelie

(Call & Response, Ghana with BSL in brackets)

Call:	A Keelie Makolay, mo paco meeno sway	(come)	
Response:	Yeah, Yeah, mo paco meeno sway	(yes, play)	x 2
Refrain together:	Mo paco meeno sway	(play / clap clap clap)	
	Mo paco meeno sway		
	Mo paco meeno sway		
	Oh mo paco meeno sway		x 2

Info: Based on a Ghanaian children's song, Awonye Nakie or Sister Nakie, this is a westernised version with a similar meaning: Hey Makolay, do you want to come and play? Yes, I want to come and play. (Source: mamalisa.com)

Due Due

(Round, Ashanti from Ghana with BSL interpretation in brackets)

Due due, barima, due due	x 2	(sorry, respect)
A bo fra ba, ama dowa dowa, due due		(children, mess around)
A bo fra ba, ama dawa dawa <i>due due</i>		
Barima due due	x 2	(respect, sorry)
Due due	x 2	

Translation: Due (sorry), Barima (a male or senior) Abofra ba (young person) ama dawa (you have fallen flat or helpless). Source: mamalisa.com

We talk about the context of this song, which I found was a rather energetic children's game. To give a context for this song, we talk about having fun, singing and playing with energy, but also remembering to say sorry out of respect for each other if anyone falls over while we play!

Underneath the Sea

(Flying-a-round with BSL. Piano backing. Topic: Under the Sea)

Underneath the sea	(sea)
Far away from land	(down)
That's where I will be	(ships sinks)
Shaking on the sand	(ship shaking)
Rattling in my rigging	(rattling rigging)
Dithering on my deck	(shaking deck)
I'm just a ner-----vous wreck!	(boat shakes and breaks)

Young Rider

(Slavic folk song. Geography - Tatras Mountains between Poland & Slovakia with BSL. Piano backing)

Young rider, apple cheeked one	(reins, apple cheeks)
Come hither, riding	(ride)
On your steed so proud and prancing	(proud, horse prancing)
Come hither riding	(ride)
No matter where I ride	(no matter, where)
Slovak mountains are my pride	(mountains, love)
Dusha moya, Dusha moya, Hey!	(love, strong)

Dusha Moya means ‘Soul of mine’ in Russian. The original version has ‘whither riding’, which makes more sense, so I will probably need to change my version over time! We sing this for fun but also linked to the topic of mountains. We also talk about the idea of somewhere being in your heart and soul no matter where you are. The children like to explain which other countries or places in Britain they feel connected too and are in their hearts even though they live in Nottingham, which helps to understand the song and sing with passion.

Twende Tuka

(Swahili – Tanzania with BSL)

Twende tuka winde le-o x 2 (walk, now)

Duka winde vie-pe-pe-o x 2 (butterflies flying around)

Chorus:

Ay ay ay vie-pe-pe-o winde x 3 (Ay ay ay Butterflies fly around)

Ay Ay Ay Hey! (claps)

X X X X X

Translation: Today, we are walking happily through fields of butterflies! The verse works as a round. Wait 4 beats to sing the chorus in unison. This is great with a djembe accompaniment.

Plynie Statek

(Call & Response, Poland. Backing and vocal tracks)

Call:

Pwi - nye sta - tek sbanana – mee

Pwi - nye vdal

Response:

Wabi do die die

Wabi do die

A caj - dur wa - do - va

spye - vow tak

Wabi do die die

Wabi do die

Pod i Pod i
Pod i me pod i
Bana noov kosh

Pod i Pod i
Pod i me pod i
Bana noov kosh Hey!

Meaning: A ship is sailing from far away laden with baskets of bananas. We sing as we unload. Give me, (pass to me), give me the baskets of bananas! We have some polish speakers at school who explain the meaning of individual words and help with translation. I also like to show the children the original language.

Płynie statek zbananami płynie wdał,
łabidudajdaj, łabidudaj.
A każdy ładował śpiewał tak,
łabidudajdaj, łabidudaj.
“Podaj, podaj,
podaj mi podaj bananów kosz
“Podaj, podaj,
podaj mi podaj bananów kosz. HEY!

(Something Inside) So Strong

(Labi Siffre – LGBTQ, Suffragettes, Civil Rights, PHSE)

The higher you build your barriers____
The taller I become
The farther you take my rights away _ _
The faster I will run
You can deny me
You can decide to turn your face away_____

No matter, because there's
Something inside so strong
I know that I can make it
‘though you’re doing me wrong, so wrong
you thought that my pride was gone, oh no

there's something inside so strong--
oh---, something inside so strong

The whole song is great for expressive singing, linking the meaning of the song to the way we sing: musical features such as contrasting dynamics, crescendo, sustained notes, clear consonants & the importance of silence. It also works well with harmony.

Song for the Climate – Bella Ciao

(Belgium song for the Climate & traditional Italian song. Backing and Live recording)

We need to wake up!
We need to wise up!
We need to o__pen our eyes and do it **now now now**
We need to **bui_____ld** a better **fu**-ture
And we need **to** start right no____w

We're on a planet
That has a problem
We've got to solve it, get involved and do it **now now now**
We need to **bui_____ld** a better **fu**-ture
And we need **to** start right no____w

Una mattina, mi son svegliato
Oh bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao ciao
Una mattina, mi son svegliato
Ho trovato l'invasor

We need to wake up!
We need to wise up!
We need to o__pen our eyes and do it **now now now**
We need to **bui_____ld** a better **fu**-ture
And we need **to** start right no____w

We need to **bui_____ld** a better **fu**-ture
And we nee_____d **to** star__t ri_____ght no____w. Hey!

[Sing for the Climate Belgium - Final clip](#)

