



the voices foundation
transforming children through singing

Working in Partnership with The Voices Foundation

A Guide for LAs, Music Services
and Primary Schools

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Introducing The Voices Foundation



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A Common Situation

For many years now, music education has been a statutory requirement within the National Curriculum. But it is a well-known fact, supported by research, that most primary school teachers lack the confidence to teach music as they teach everything else. It is a common situation.

For the last fourteen years, in hundreds of primary schools, the Voices Foundation has shown that there are practical ways of helping teachers and schools to address this problem. These include building teacher confidence and self-belief, providing appropriate resources and providing support for an extended period of time.

For the Voices Foundation approach it is essential that:

- the Headteacher is keen to address the issue and
- the teaching staff come to a corporate agreement that this programme is something the school is going to do within its plans for development.

What do we mean by Music Education?

Many primary schools regularly present impressive concerts and musical events. Yet, without diminishing the value of 'music-making' activity of this kind, it does not necessarily provide, on its own, a music education which is accessible to all, within the school curriculum, in a way which develops individual musicianship, personal development and cultural growth.

Music is a skill-based subject - not unlike mathematics in the way skills and knowledge are acquired cumulatively. Music learning also has similarities to language learning; both are acquired through our ears and need to be performed – in language by use of voice, in music by use of voice and instruments. (Music has two performing media).

Music education is best acquired on a 'little-and-often' basis. It makes sense, therefore, to think in terms of 'curriculum music' (in class, for all) and 'extended-curriculum music' (music-making). Quite often, teachers put the cart before the horse; it is the foundation activities of 'curriculum music' which enable and support the music activities of the 'extended curriculum'.

The Voices Foundation is dedicated to helping primary schools come to terms with developing their 'curriculum music' in two ways:

- by working directly with schools for a minimum of one year, and
- by offering courses for primary teachers.

The Foundation Programme within Primary Schools

The Foundation Programme is designed to provide the training and support needed to help each teacher in the school, whatever his/her previous experience, to teach music as s/he teaches other areas of the curriculum:

- by achieving a level of musical skill which instils confidence and releases innovative teaching approaches;
- by using a planning and teaching programme to which most teachers can readily relate and which is in line with general primary school practices;
- by setting levels of expectation which are high, realistic and practicable;
- by providing the resources and advisory teacher support which facilitate and stimulate good music teaching practices.

The Programme aims to help pupils achieve a high standard of musicianship by

- making use of a rich and accessible repertoire of vocal material from which many of the learning objectives are derived;
- enabling pupils to acquire those music skills and concepts which enable aural development and a progression of learning to take place, appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils;
- recognising the crucial role of the voice as a medium for responding and performing;
- encouraging pupil motivation so that pupils take their own initiatives and are comfortable when working independently of the teacher.

The Programme consists of the following:

- **An initial (possibly clustered) meeting** with Headteachers of schools involved.
- **In-service training for all teachers** (this is a whole-school programme) - learning basic repertoire, acquiring the music skills needed for the early stages of teaching and becoming familiar with appropriate teaching ideas and pedagogical principles. (TOTAL 1.5 days in the year)
- **In-service training for music curriculum leaders**, to help them acquire the extended music skills and concepts needed for the understanding of curriculum structure and planning, to support the preparation of a school scheme of work and to identify how the curriculum leader might support and enable colleagues in the teaching of music. Clustered with curriculum leaders from other schools (if applicable). (TOTAL 3 days in the year: normally 3 weekdays)

- **Advisory Teacher in-class visits to each teacher**, to provide support by (for example) being a member of the class, offering support when needed and team-teaching if appropriate – as a professional friend.
(Two visits per term to each teacher: TOTAL 6 visits in the year)
- At some point during the year, **a visit by a senior member of The Voices Foundation staff** to shadow the Advisory Teacher, monitor his/her work in the school and provide support.
- **The Singing Celebration** - one morning and/or afternoon session(s) to provide an opportunity for all classes to share their music learning experiences: normally towards the end of the final term.

The Voices Foundation allocates one of its specially trained Advisory Teachers to lead INSET sessions and to work closely with each member of the teaching staff for the period of the programme.

Primary School Courses

For many years, The Voices Foundation has provided ground-breaking courses for teachers and music curriculum leaders in all parts of the country.

Our 5-Day Course, with one meeting on each of five half-terms through the year, has been enormously successful in the past and very well-received by course members.

“Having taught music for many years, I feel that only now do I really know how to teach music.”

“This course has been an absolute joy – thank you from the bottom of my heart !”

“The course was well-researched and presented by an expert. The materials were all useful and can be applied to teaching straight away. My teaching has been transformed this year and the results are immediately obvious in children’s attainment. This is the framework for teaching I have always been looking for.”

In addition we offer alternative courses, workshops and INSETs, ranging from 1-Day Taster Sessions to a 3-Day Course in the basics of our methodology.

The Partnership Concept



The Voices Foundation has particular expertise in the primary music curriculum – that is, in-class music learning for all pupils, taught by their class-teacher. Over the past 14 years we have slowly built up a small team of 35 Advisory Teachers (ATs) who lead our in-school programmes.

One of the problems of deploying our small team of ATs nationally has been making sure that they are available in the right place at the right time. This limits the number of schools that we can work in. To circumvent this problem, we have started a programme over the past 3 years of running courses in partnership with Local Authorities/Music Services to train Local Advisory Teachers, thereby enabling us to reach many more schools.

The Proposal

We propose building a number of local partnerships, designed to enable and support suitably qualified and experienced local ‘advisory teachers’ and ‘advance skills teachers’ to become ‘Local Advisory Teachers’ (LATs) – still employed by their LA of course, but with the additional benefit of working in partnership with The Voices Foundation and its staff.

The Partnerships

We believe that the involved parties will each bring useful experience to their partnership, with consequent benefits for the children and the schools. For example:

With regard to the training of Local Advisory Teachers, The Voices Foundation can provide the following:

- A primary music methodology and associated repertoire based on a carefully researched progression of learning for starters of all ages;
- Printed materials and research papers;
- training in the methodology and repertoire for LAT candidates;
- appropriate and innovative pedagogical approaches gleaned from many years of working with teachers and children;
- in-class support for LATs when they work with teachers;
- a ‘special relationship’ with The Voices Foundation, including use of its materials, ongoing association with its ATs and the opportunity to attend the Voices Foundation annual residential conference.

LA and Music Service staff would be able to offer the following:

- local knowledge
- local music expertise
- the capability to help teachers sustain and further develop programmes in schools (essential for serious music curriculum development);
- a rich exchange of views about primary music education.

Moving forward in partnership

This is best achieved by first setting up a one-year project with a small number of LA primary schools (led by The Voices Foundation) and, either simultaneously or consecutively, initiating an LAT training programme for selected local teachers, as shown below.

1. The LA invites The Voices Foundation to allocate a Voices Foundation Advisory Teacher to lead an initial first year Foundation Programme in a local primary school or small cluster of primary schools. This prepares the ground for a whole 3-Year Programme in which a reduced Years 2 and 3 are tailored to the schools needs, supported by the same Advisory Teacher or, possibly, the newly-trained LAT.
 - For LAs seeking to know more before making a commitment, this creates an opportunity for the LA to obtain feedback from its own schools about the effectiveness of the programme and the value of the methodology to their music curricula. It also creates an opportunity for potential LATs to be identified in the light of information received from the schools.
 - For LAs wishing to start LAT training immediately, simultaneous to starting a Foundation Programme, there is an ideal opportunity for LATs in training to shadow the Voices Foundation Advisory Teacher in local schools while they are doing their training.
2. The LA invites The Voices Foundation to train a Local Advisory Teacher team for the LA. A key feature in the development of the partnership would be the selection and training of LAT candidates.

LAT Eligibility Criteria

- Has taught in primary school for at least three years (normally);
 - Has completed a course in Music to Higher Education level;
 - Has a passionate interest in helping to improve primary music education by supporting and enabling teachers in class;
 - Is keen for personal ongoing professional development;
 - Is committed to promoting The Voices Foundation methodology in primary schools;
- and, possibly
- Has been identified by the LA/Music Service for LAT training (possibly has an AT role within the LA, AST status or known good practice as a teacher of music in primary school)

Selection of Candidates for Training

- Representatives from both members of the partnership will interview candidates to decide on eligibility, qualifications and suitability.
- Representatives from both members of the partnership will observe the candidate teaching music to a primary class.

Selected candidates would then be invited to take part in the LAT training.

Training of LAT Candidates

- Candidates will attend a Voices Foundation five-day course to learn about the methodology to be used.
- Candidates will attend a three-day course to learn about The Voices Foundation, Voices Foundation procedures and working with the teacher in class.

The Training Courses

The course tutors will be senior staff from The Voices Foundation. The venues for this training will be at a local centre, as geographically convenient as possible for course members.

The 5-Day Methodology Course

Course members will be required to meet on 5 separate weekdays, half-termly through the year. Course content includes the following:

Song repertoire - the basis of methodology

- Using songs from children's tradition
- The technique of teaching songs by rote

Use of voice as a basis for learning

- Finding the singing voice
- The structural and expressive elements of music
- Pulse and rhythm
- Phrase and melodic structure
- A structure for teaching pitch through relative solmisation
- Dynamics, timbre and texture

Vocal development

- Posture
- Breathing
- Placing the voice
- Intonation
- Articulation

Aural development through use of voice

- Avoiding the teaching of 'theory'

The place of instruments

- As a reinforcement to vocal work
- Introducing fixed pitch concepts
- Classroom organisation

Pedagogical approaches in primary music teaching

- Sustaining pupil interest and motivation

Improvising

- An essential reinforcement to music learning

The place of notation in the music curriculum

- Reading and writing based on aural experience
- The use of rhythm-solfa
- The use of staff notation

The 5-Day Methodology Course (continued)

Composing

- As a support for learning
- Setting appropriate tasks

The role of the coordinator

- As a teacher
- As a consultant and supporter

Planning a scheme of work for the school

- Planning for a progression of learning
- Planning for continuity
- Strategic planning
- Tactical planning

Singing chorally

- Approaching two-part work based on developments in class
- Choosing appropriate repertoire
- The importance of a cappella singing from the early stages

The extended curriculum

- The correlation of classwork with school music-making events
- The correlation of classwork with the work of visiting music teachers
- The correlation of classwork with visiting music performers
- Connections with the local community

The 3-Day LAT Course

Course members meet on 3 separate weekdays, with a requirement that course members attend each of the days. Course content includes the following:

Module 1

Introducing the methodology into schools (1.5 days)

Module 2

The advisory teacher in the primary school class (1.0 day)

Module 3

Shadowing an experienced Voices Foundation
Advisory Teacher (0.5 days)

Successful candidates will receive written recognition of their LAT status after they have completed one year as an LAT (probationary period).

The Deployment of Local Advisory Teachers



Introduction

Before LAT training is completed, decisions will need to be made about how LATs will be deployed within their Local Authority. Although The Voices Foundation is willing to help if needed, clearly the responsibility for deployment belongs to the LA, as the employer.

The LAT role in school

The purpose of the training will have been to equip the LAT to provide support for primary school teachers so that they become capable of teaching music to their own class, as they teach everything else. It is not the function of an LAT to be the music teacher for the school.

What the qualified Voices Foundation LAT will offer to the school

The training will equip the LAT to provide:

- A carefully researched primary music repertoire, accessible to teachers and pupils alike, which forms the basis for an appropriate methodology for the primary school age-range.
- The confidence and self-belief which the teacher needs to proceed effectively with his/her own class.
- Professional development sessions for all teachers (and other relevant school staff). This to be at the beginning of each term (initially, for one school year).
- A range of teaching approaches and pedagogical ideas to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Help in creating a scheme of work which has a progression of learning, leading to the possibility of continuity from year to year.
- Sympathetic and individual support for each teacher teaching in class, with one class visit each half term, including verbal and written feedback.
- Written resources for the teacher, and guidance in choosing appropriate published material.
- Support for the school's Music Curriculum Leader so that s/he can sustain and further develop the school's programme when the LAT has moved on elsewhere.
- Continuing support as and when needed by the school.
- Local knowledge and information about extended curriculum opportunities, including LA music activities and events.

What The Voices Foundation will offer to the LA on an ongoing basis

- One quality assurance in-class visit (support and monitoring) to each LAT in his/her first year (probationary year), by a senior member of The Voices Foundation staff.
- One quality assurance in-class visit (support and monitoring) to each LAT in each subsequent year (up to five years), by a senior member of The Voices Foundation staff.
- Supportive documentation for LATs (e.g. an LAT Handbook) for personal reference and guidance.
- New and developed Voices Foundation primary school materials as they become available (e.g. repertoire, classroom resources and written material for teachers).
- The opportunity for fully-qualified LATs to attend and participate in The Voices Foundation Annual Advisory Teacher Residential Conference (normally three days at the end of August).
- Access to The Voices Foundation LAT helpline (telephone and/or e-mail) at all times during term time.

“For years I have supported teachers and tried to give them the confidence to teach music, but the different schemes I tried did not seem to help develop their musical understanding or confidence. The Voices approach has changed all this. Teachers now want to teach music. They have a clearer understanding and knowledge of what they are teaching. As a music specialist I cannot praise the Voices approach enough. I have seen a real transformation in attitude towards music and the teaching of music”.

Music Co-ordinator, Merton Primary School, London – one of the first Local Authorities to train Voices LATs.

Appendix A

What the teacher can expect from the Foundation Programme



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1. An increase in personal confidence in the making and teaching of music with children.
2. Personal music development and teaching achievement.
3. Help in developing a core of musicianship skills that increase confidence and awareness of the possibilities and opportunities in music-making, participation and transactional response - key components in meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.
4. Greater personal skills in
 - listening and thinking
 - internalising and memorising
 - assimilating new repertoire
 - singing and vocal development
 - using solfa (pitch names for the voice) and rhythm names to develop music reading and writing skills
 - the appropriate use of instruments.
5. Greater personal understanding and knowledge of
 - musical terms and terminology
 - the musical elements of structure, pitch, pulse, rhythm etc.
 - songs, singing-games, rhymes, part-songs appropriate to children's ages and stage of learning
 - what is important when using the singing voice
 - how the acquisition of song repertoire can provide an essential foundation for children's learning and personal musicianship.
6. Greater repertoire of teaching ideas and strategies which encourage each child
 - to perform music and make musical responses with confidence
 - to improvise music using the voice and instruments
 - to find and develop the singing voice
 - to use his/her own aural and 'thinking' skills
 - to accept a musical and social responsibility for making and performing music
 - to increase his/her personal confidence and self-esteem
 - to acquire a progressive understanding and knowledge of music (how it is structured and assembled)
 - to develop reading and writing with conventional and other notations.

Appendix B



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The benefits for the child

Music education promotes high level intellectual and physical attainment, and evokes deep emotional and aesthetic response; it stimulates processes of thinking which require high levels of accuracy and precision. Music is a remarkable medium for communication between people of different cultures, ages and social background. Music education is not simply about learning a body of knowledge; in a unique way, it provides a rich variety of opportunities for acquiring and developing a wide range of musical, personal and social skills.

Musically, the child develops:

- his/her singing voice
- memory
- inner hearing
- aural awareness
- musical thinking
- improvising skills
- reading skills
- writing skills
- composing skills
- musical instrument capability
- an understanding of the need for aesthetic standards and values

Personally, the child:

- learns to work to high levels of involvement and concentration
- develops physical and mental co-ordination
- develops precision thinking
- increases personal discipline
- gains the ability to make informed judgements with confidence
- grows in self-esteem
- refines decision-making capability
- acquires listening skills
- acquires learning skills
- develops reasoning skills
- develops spatial awareness
- develops skills of imagination and creativity
- acquires an awareness of cultural identity
- can improve fluency of speech
- achieves deeper understanding in the use of language and number
- comes to appreciate the need for personal standards and values

Socially, the child learns:

- sympathetic relationships with other pupils
- a sensitivity towards the feelings of others, including adults
- to co-operate with others
- to appreciate others' achievements and difficulties
- to value the work and contributions of others
- to respect other points of view
- to share with others in a common purpose
- to develop a closer relationship with the teacher
- to relate experiences across the curriculum
- to celebrate cultural diversity at home and abroad
- the importance of having social standards and values

Recent research in The United States of America and in Switzerland shows how a good music education curriculum can lead to improved academic results, particularly in numeracy and literacy. Teachers in Voices Foundation Projects also report improved behaviour in school and reductions in playground aggression. And, additionally, the child develops aesthetic awareness at a time when education is weighted heavily towards the vocational and the technological in a screen-dominated age.

For further information and costings, please contact

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