

KEY:

MMS: Music Making SENse

LMS: Lambeth Music Service

SEN: Special Educational Needs

PECS: Picture Exchange Communication System

This report was completed by Kirsty Mees (Co-director of Music Making SENse and LMS Singing Coordinator). I (Kirsty) was actively involved in all elements of the project including delivery and this report reflects my thoughts and interpretations of the data and experiences of the project including feedback from the lead MMS facilitator, Kim Perkins (Co-director of Music Making SENSE, LMS SENCo and member of the Lambeth Sounds Strategic Board).

Introduction

Hear Our Voice: developing and sharing inclusive practices around youth voice and singing through vocal resources chosen by disabled and non-disabled young people in Lambeth.

'Everyone should sing because it's fun and it's a great way to express yourself!'

Singing Champion feedback

Hear Our Voice was a project with big ambitions designed to pilot and explore inclusive practices around youth voice, singing, and vocal resources, with the aim of providing a glimpse of what can be achieved and what needs to be considered in our work with young people across many different settings. The project involved multiple areas and activities which presented both opportunities to provide varied examples of successes and best practice, and limitations in how much could be achieved, explored, and analysed within each area/activity. As a pilot project, results reflect these successes and limitations, and this report provides a summary of these findings with consideration of the need for broader investigation.

Hear Our Voice aimed to provide opportunities for a) inclusive youth voice - enabling young people with learning needs, including those with severe and complex needs, to make creative choices and collaborate with non-disabled peers, b) inclusive singing practice for all Lambeth primary and special schools – supporting teachers (incl. non-music specialists) to use signing and vocalising to support young people with communication and learning needs, and

enable schools' staff and young people to start using Makaton inclusively for the benefit of everyone in the community who needs support with speech and language development, by providing training in how to locate, tailor and implement signs. As a pilot project, Hear Our Voice has been successful in achieving its overall aims and MMS have gained valuable insight into youth voice, activities which worked well and why, what needed adapting and how projects such as this could be extended and developed.

Results of the project suggest that:

- (i) Focusing on youth voice provides opportunities for disabled and non-disabled young people to collaborate and be actively involved in making decisions about their singing experiences, and that this opportunity is valued and enjoyed. Collaboration in this context promotes respectful and supportive responses and acceptance of all ways of participation.
- (ii) Developing and extending youth voice opportunities is vital; approaches to supporting youth voice may need to be reframed when working with young people with SEN as certain supports are needed to ensure inclusive collaboration.
- (iii) Lambeth primary schools involved in the project value inclusive singing resources/activities and would like to be involved in future opportunities.
- (iv) There are challenges around school involvement, particularly SEN settings.
- (v) Makaton is a powerful tool for supporting inclusive singing practices and is seen as a helpful by schools and students.
- (vi) Sharing feedback on musical learning pathways and future opportunities is a new experience for some young people, highlighting the need for youth voice opportunities and supporting these discussions.
- (vii) Meeting structure is most beneficial with a mix of interactive elements, clear choice making opportunities, open questions with example prompts where needed, and visual and verbal support systems.
- (viii) Opportunities such as the celebration video are a wonderful way to engage different settings and highlights the benefits of singing and collaboration through joint repertoire and singing experiences.
- (ix) Each element of the project had the potential to be developed further and future projects may limit focus areas to allow for further investigation of their impact.

The Project Outcomes

There were three outcomes explored across the project described below:

Outcome 1

To pilot an inclusive singing initiative and resource for young people in Lambeth that engages primary and special school students, supports young people with learning needs, particularly those with communication needs.

The Hear Our Voice project tied into the recent LMS Big Summer Sing event where Lambeth primary schools were invited to participate in an online performance singing two songs together and create a celebration video. Feedback was extremely positive of this event and MMS wanted to extend this offer with inclusive resources, involvement of SEN settings, and by supporting young people to be involved in creating vocal resources by selecting singing champions to form a youth voice council. MMS also wanted to provide additional opportunities for schools to be involved in a celebration video using one of the vocal resources created. The Hear Our Voice resources were well received by those who accessed them and comprised songs chosen by the singing champions. Resources incorporated Makaton signing, training supports for schools as well as tools for celebrating and promoting different aspects of the project.

Overall SEN participation was well represented across the project, particularly within the youth voice council (discussed further in Outcome 2). The resources and online meetings with the singing champions supported young people with SEN, particularly those with communication needs, in a number of ways (i) Singing champions were supported during each meeting using Makaton signing, PECS based visual aids, clear instructions, staff support in their setting, as well as time and space within the meetings to comment and feedback (ii) The song video resources included PECS, Makaton signing and additional accompanying resources such as PECS and phonetic lyrics and separate audio tracks (iii) The Makaton training video was available for all primary and SEN settings and focused on applying and differentiating Makaton to support adaption to the song resources where needed.

Feedback from the singing champions was positive, however, limited due to meeting attendance and session format in the final feedback meeting (discussed further under 'Participant Feedback'). MMS learnt a lot from the singing champion meetings with the first two meetings being very successful; participants confidently sharing ideas and making choices. These two meetings were interactive and included practical elements, opportunities to make clear choices and discuss further if they wanted. There was also an opportunity to respond to a more open question about singing within each meeting. Question structure, timeline, staffing, and experience were all areas impacting the final meeting and although feedback received was very positive, we were unable to gain enough information for a conclusive analysis of the singing champions experiences of the use of the resources in their setting and of the project as a whole. Feedback from schools was also very positive (discussed further in Outcome 3).

Overall, MMS celebrates the involvement and support for both SEN and non-SEN participants, the quality of resources created, as well as the positive feedback received. The benefits opportunities such as this can have on inclusive practices and personal achievement for all young people in Lambeth remains clear. Schools are looking for support and resources to promote youth voice and inclusive singing practices and value opportunities to collaborate and create something together. Given more time, potential future endeavours would need to look at (i) ways to support more schools in accessing and utilising the resources (ii) cementing ideas surrounding youth voice and developing the role of singing champions. The resources created from the project are open ended and available ongoing to Lambeth schools with the potential to have further impact in the future for both Lambeth and the wider community.

Outcome 2

To create a singing champion / youth voice council that is inclusive of disability, race, religion, gender, and culture, and share our practice with Lambeth, and the music and education communities.

Hear Our Voice aimed to work with young people to create inclusive song resources which could be accessed by all. Youth voice underpinned all areas of the project as we piloted how we could promote youth leadership in singing opportunities for disabled and non-disabled participants. As a pilot project Hear Our Voice provides a small-scale example of the potential benefits of youth voice, with project activities focusing on song selection, and feedback on participant experience, singing and the resources. Although small, benefits were observed consistently in areas such as participant confidence, choice making, enjoyment, teamwork, communication skills, consideration of others' ideas, acceptance of varying ways of participation, reflection and building an understanding of the potential to guide their own musical learning.

Lambeth primary schools and SEN secondary schools were invited to nominate singing champions to form a youth voice council who chose songs for which inclusive resources were created to support singing opportunities for both disabled and non-disabled students. MMS asked schools to choose singing champions based on their enjoyment of music and singing and who might enjoy expressing their views and being part of the programming process. Information requested on the application form included SEN needs, gender, and ethnicity. 11 schools nominated singing champions, with two schools nominating 2 participants which resulted in 13 singing champions. MMS initially planned to have 10 singing champions, however, the applications provided a broad range of needs and backgrounds and MMS felt it could accommodate this number into its planning.

There were 6 participants with specific needs stated on their application form; 4 of which were Autism. 2 participants had non-specific learning needs stated in the additional description section of the form, and 1 had challenging circumstances listed. 2 of the participants with specific needs were from mainstream primary settings and 4 were from SEN secondary settings. The specific needs outlined provided close to the 50/50 balance of SEN and non-SEN participants MMS set out to achieve. Gender was not as evenly dispersed with 9 females and 3 males and is an area which would need further discussion in future projects to promote and support a more even gender balance. Overall MMS felt that the youth council nominees were representative of Lambeth as a borough and inclusive of disability, race, religion, and culture.

Further discussion on representation within the youth voice council may have become more prominent if there had been additional nominees. MMS consulted with the LMS Diversity Ambassador who gave feedback on the application process and suggested some changes which were implemented on the nomination form. There was also discussion about the project as a whole and how it could be extended and explored in different ways with the schools. Within the scope of this pilot project these ideas were not able to be explored however were noted as important considerations if a larger scale project was to take place in the future. We did not need to consult any further on selecting singing champions with the Diversity Ambassador as we did not have additional nominees and on reflection may not have had the capacity regarding timeline to follow up with schools and request further nominations and proceed in time for the first singing champions online meeting. Future projects may look further into the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) values of MMS and the Hub with the potential for a youth council with many more participants.

Overall, both disabled and non-disabled participants were able to access all areas of the project and were supported to engage in the choosing process and share their ideas and feedback. Singing champions were supported to make choices using methods appropriate to their needs (providing equity of participation and choice). The final meeting needed some adaptations, however, the first two meetings and resources were accessible to all participants removing barriers to participation and supporting individuals to contribute in a way that suited them; supporting youth voice and promoting contribution and collaboration. Future projects may consider how singing champions can take on further leadership and direct all areas and activities within the project while still supporting all participants including those with additional needs.

In terms of sharing our practice with LMS; throughout the project we have provided regular updates to LMS/Hub representatives and sent through the celebration video. MMS aims to meet with LMS/Hub representatives to discuss the project findings overall including teacher feedback and potential continuation through LMS singing activities. Throughout the project the Lead MMS facilitator has also been sharing updates with the Lambeth Sounds Strategic Board with discussion about its impact of the LMS/Hub singing strategy which is one of the strategic board's priorities. We hope to build on the findings and ideas around youth voice in collaboration with LMS/Hub.

To share our practice with the music and education communities we will be completing a Sound Sense article and sharing this via MMS website and once we have discussed the project with LMS/Hub we plan to share our findings with other Hubs and organisations to look at how similar projects surrounding youth voice may fit into their current/future activities and priorities.

Outcome 3

To upskill and enable teachers (including non-music specialists) to use Makaton and inclusive singing practices in their classroom through participation in this project.

MMS aimed to promote the use of Makaton in supporting inclusive practice by providing inclusive singing resources and training in how to locate, tailor and implement signs. Resources were sent to all Lambeth Primary and SEN Secondary schools and included the 4 songs chosen by the singing champions and a Makaton training video which explored applying and differentiating Makaton to support different needs. Teachers involved in the project were surveyed to find out the usefulness of the resources, what they felt they had gained from the project, teaching and inclusivity practices, and future initiatives.

The timeline for the project was moved back by 4 weeks based on school feedback/requests to allow more time to prepare for the celebration video and explore the resources. MMS received feedback relating to 10 primary settings, 7 of which were involved in the celebration video and 5 had singing champions involved in the project. We received feedback relating to 3 SEN Secondary settings, 2 of which had singing champions involved in the project, however, this feedback was from MMS tutors and settings. The feedback received from schools was within MMS's expectations in terms of numbers and may only be a small representation of the number of schools who actually utilised the resources. Gaining feedback in this context can be challenging and some schools may not have had the capacity to share feedback or access the resources at this time.

There are many factors which may have influenced this including (i) appropriate school liaison not receiving information about the project (ii) the timeline being short and schools not being able to fit it into their current music provision (iii) the pandemic and continued restrictions around singing (iv) capacity of staff to access and explore the resources. For similar reasons the social media campaign we had hoped for with schools sharing in the moment examples of their use of the resources was not achievable.

MMS aimed to create Makaton resources which would support teachers including non-music specialists to use/adapt Makaton signing in their singing activities. On completion of the resources however, MMS noted that some level of specialism may be required when working with particular needs. Some settings may require a music specialist to adapt the resources including differentiating Makaton signs and selecting aspects of songs to focus on to promote vocalisation which may involve using the resources as a teacher training tool and leading pieces themselves. This was the case in the settings led by the lead MMS facilitator working with participants with significant communication and learning needs. As a pilot project there wasn't the capacity to cover all areas in the training video, or provide additional training or resources, however, future projects may look to extend and tailor the training element for specific needs and settings.

The feedback we did receive from schools (discussed further in 'Feedback from schools/use of resources') was very positive and outlined benefits for all participants including SEN students in both mainstream and SEN settings, and in promoting inclusive singing practices. Feedback suggests (i) Makaton and visual aids supported all students including those with SEN to learn the songs and build confidence, and improved staff teaching practices and signing skills (ii) students and staff enjoyed the repertoire choices and using the resources (iii) resources supported extra singing opportunities for the whole school including singing assemblies, and were accessible/inclusive (iv) schools would like more resources such as this as well as extended opportunities to support youth voice, collaboration and performance.

Project Activities

Hear Our Voice involved many elements and activities including (i) Corresponding with Schools/Hub and selecting Singing Champions (ii) Online meetings with Singing Champions – selecting songs (iii) Creating and sharing resources for songs and celebration video (iv) Feedback from Singing Champions (v) Feedback from schools/use of resources (vi) Final steps (ongoing) - exploring legacy of project. This report will address each of these elements, summarise the findings and reflect on both successes and challenges.

(i) Corresponding with Schools/Hub and Selecting Singing Champions

MMS shared details of the project with LMS and discussed ways we could work with Lambeth schools and collaborate on the project including liaising with the newly appointed LMS Diversity Ambassador and tying into any LMS/Hub priorities. LMS were able to support the project in many areas including sending out information about the project to primary schools and setting up some of the administration structures. Information for secondary SEN schools was sent out via MMS. Initial information sent to schools including a summary of the

project, different options for being involved, and the application process for nominating a singing champion. The MMS lead facilitator liaised with a MMS SEN setting who regularly convene student councils for young people with severe and complex needs and discussed the MMS approach to creating the youth voice council. The setting provided feedback confirming they would adopt a similar approach.

Once nominations were received and singing champions elected, a confirmation letter was sent to all schools who applied and included a letter for the students with information about becoming a singing champion and what would be involved. Singing champions were asked to select their own song choices to present in the first online meeting based on four genre categories chosen by MMS. These categories were created to support the choice making process and ensure a wide range of repertoire options would be available to choose from. MMS aimed to have a final selection of songs which were musically balanced and mindful of equity, diversity, and inclusivity of all kinds. Stylistically, the repertoire was guided by the champion’s choices, however MMS also made some song suggestions within the categories to provide options for different genres and opportunities to encounter and chose from previously unknown styles of music/songs.



Congratulations!

You have been chosen to be a Singing Champion.

You will be:

sharing ideas, choosing songs

and listening to other Singing Champions

Together we will choose 4 songs for all

Lambeth schools to sing and share.

Song Choice Categories

1. A Pop Song	
2. A Song from the Past	
3. By people different to us or from a different culture	
4. A Song about Singing and Celebrating	

Schools were very enthusiastic about the project and the idea of singing champions forming a youth voice council.

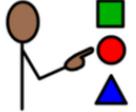
Feedback from School: Selecting Singing Champion
'Thank you for selecting our Singing Champion, he is totally thrilled to bits and already his mother has commented on the change this has had on him knowing he has been selected. He has already selected his song and looking forward to his first meeting'

(ii) Online Meetings with Singing Champions – Selecting Songs

Overall, the youth voice council online meetings were very successful within the scope of the project. We had originally hoped to run some if not all of the meetings in person, however, this would have been challenging to coordinate with multiple settings, venue considerations and continued restrictions around COVID-19. The students appeared confident meeting in an online format as many had experienced learning in this way throughout lockdown periods. Meeting with multiple schools, however, was not a regular occurrence for many of the participants and there was much excitement from the singing champions, particularly as the meetings were focused on their ideas and choices.

MMS had many structures in place to support singing champions to share their ideas and make choices including those participants with additional needs. These included (i) social stories with PECS symbols sent to singing champions before each meeting (ii) reading out the social story at the start of each meeting (iii) visual aids such a visual timetable and questions shared on screen with PECS symbols (iv) clear instruction from MMS leader (v) time and space to share ideas and discuss further. All participants appeared to enjoy the meeting format and found the inclusive nature supportive and motivating. There were unique and wonderful moments of interaction and engagement, and all students were accepting and supportive of all ways of participation.

Virtual Meeting Timetable

	1. Read through the social story together
	2. Sing a Hello Song
	3. Welcome all nominees and schools
	4. Discuss choosing songs and what the project hopes to achieve
	5. Discuss song choice categories
	6. Compile a list of Singing Champions song suggestions
	7. Share a song
	8. Discuss our next meeting
	9. Feedback
	10. Sing and say goodbye

The first and second online meetings focussed on introducing the singing champions to each other, celebrating their nomination, presenting/selecting songs, practical activities, and sharing some thoughts on singing. Overall, the first and second meetings were very successful with clear guidelines for the singing champions and interactive musical activities including listening and performing. Questions were also communicated well by MMS leaders with options to select an answer or go into more detail if desired. There was one open question in each meeting which fit well into the overall format and participants were able to focus and consider this question, with support where needed. There were a number of challenges around meeting 3 discussed further in 'Participant Feedback'.

Online Meeting 1: Sharing Song Choices

Attendance: 9 out of 11 schools

Meeting 1 involved celebrating the singing champion nominees, introducing the project with a social story and creating a list of songs chosen by the singing champions. In preparation for sharing their song choices, singing champions were sent the social story and 4 song choice categories in advance. A list of song suggestions within each category was also sent to schools to help introduce each category and provide some listening examples if needed. The MMS Leader asked singing champions to share their song ideas one at a time and also asked for supporting staff/participants to type the song title/artist into the chat function to ensure the correct information was received.

The MMS leader led a practical activity with a song example from one of the categories, performing it live with actions and singing. The MMS leader chose a song which could be explored in multiple ways and encouraged participants to join in however they would like. Finally, the MMS leader ended the session by asking an open question about singing: 'What do you love about singing?'

1.  Share  your  song  choice  and  artist
2.  What  do you  love  about  Singing?

Participant Feedback

'It makes me feel like I can express myself through song'

'I feel calm, I really like the rhythm'

'I like singing because it makes me smile and my name means smile'

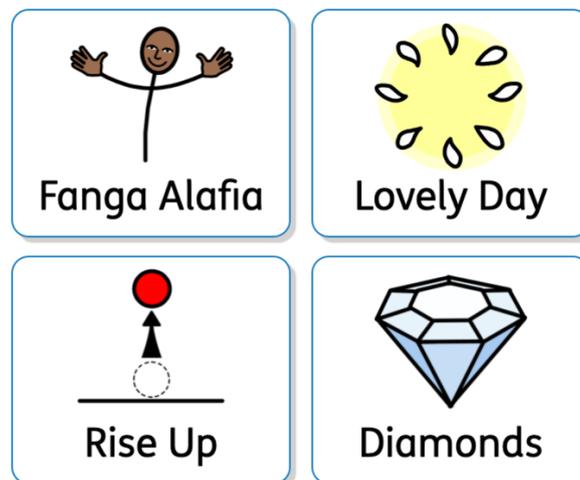
Online Meeting 2: Choosing Songs

Attendance: 7 out of 11 schools (feedback from one participant was received via email)

Meeting 2 opened with one SEN participant, of their own initiative, reading the social story for the group. Meeting 2 involved discussing the song choices from meeting 1 and sharing the final list of songs to choose/vote from. This final list was created by MMS based on the singing champions song choices. 2 songs for each of the 4 genre categories were chosen and singing champions listened/watched music videos of these choices and voted on their favourite within each category. Any songs which did not make this final list were discussed with the singing champions and reasons given. When selecting the final list MMS considered areas such as providing a range of songs/styles, copyright, complexity of lyrics and age appropriateness.

Without prompting, the singing champions considered different criteria when making their choices such as the tempo and feel of the music and how one song might balance with another. They were confident and enthusiastic to express their views about each song. Everyone was very respectful of each other's opinions and gave space for each participant to make their comments.

The final song choices were:



One singing champion appeared unsure in the meeting about the song choices. The MMS leader discussed their concerns suggesting the potential of fitting in another choice if possible. However, after discussion with the singing champion, the MMS leader confirmed that the issue was not around liking or disliking the songs, it was around consideration of how students with additional needs may access the pieces. The singing champion cared deeply about what we were trying to achieve, showing emotional maturity and commitment to her role. The MMS leader discussed how the resources would be created and accessible and after the meeting asked the participant's school to discuss any further concerns and feedback to MMS.

Participant Feedback when describing Fanga Alafia:

'It makes me lose my breath'

'Let's do this'

The MMS leader finished the meeting with an open question, similar to meeting 1, to get everyone thinking about singing as well as their wider involvement in the decision-making process: 'Why should everybody sing?'

Participant Feedback

'I think people sing because they like their voices to be shown and they like to sing because maybe it calms them down, like I do'

'Because it's a way of expressing feelings, a different way'

'... it's just saying your emotions in a more rhythm way'

The singing champions were also informed about the celebration video in this meeting and how this would be shared etc. They were also asked if they enjoyed the meeting with a unanimous yes response received.

(iii) Creating and sharing resources for songs and celebration video

Once final song choices were made, the MMS team created video resources for each song which included differentiated Makaton signing enabling all Lambeth primary and special school students, regardless of needs, to participate in learning and performing the songs. Resources were designed to support participants across all schools to be able to engage in the activities in the way they choose to communicate and express themselves. Some may have sung all the words and signed, some may have vocalised certain parts or just signed, and some may have just wanted to hear or move to the music – all these expressions were encouraged and celebrated.

The resource creation process was challenging in terms of timeline and the many functions involved including recording, filming, editing, and sharing of the resources. The final products were very much in line with what MMS had hoped to achieve in terms of quality and detail, however, future projects with a bigger timeline/resources, may focus further on this area and look at enhancing/extending the final product such as creating live instrumental tracks etc.

Resources were sent to all Lambeth primary and SEN secondary schools who were encouraged to share the resources across their whole school (e.g. throughout classes, choirs, singing assemblies) and to post videos/photos as part of our social media campaign of their students exploring the resources. The potential for participation from students and staff was high, however, it is difficult to know based on feedback received how many schools utilised the resources. In future projects there may be space in the timeline to focus further on gaining feedback and looking at different ways of measuring and supporting different approaches to feedback.

The celebration video was an activity which followed on from a similar event run by LMS; the 'Big Summer Sing' which was well received by schools involved. MMS chose one of the Hear Our Voice resources and asked schools to send in a video of a class/vocal group performing it. MMS chose Fanga Alafia as it allowed the largest number of schools to take part in a wide number of ways which they could adapt to meet their group needs. For example, it worked well for all ages including Early Years, was upbeat and repetitive, non-music specialists could support students to rehearse it, there were options to move and vocalise freely, and the words were approachable.

With high ambitions MMS hoped to receive 10 videos and we did achieve this. This was an area we were not sure how it would eventuate as there were additional requirements for schools around time, commitment, and permissions. MMS had all administrative systems in place to support permissions including relevant policies and procedures on use of data and how the video would be shared. Based on feedback from schools and discussion with Sound Connections, we decided to move the timeline back for this aspect of the project to allow schools time to learn/record the song for the celebration video and explore the resources. This also moved back the final feedback meeting for the singing champions. If we had not changed the timeline, we may not have received 10 videos to create the celebration video.

Similar to the resource creation, the celebration video task was complex and future projects and initiatives may focus on this element alone. MMS had support from an MMS colleague to help us edit the video footage to create the wonderful final product which was shared with all schools and during the final feedback meeting with the singing champions. The video was very successful and highlights the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the students as well as their exploration of the material and the benefits of collaborative singing opportunities such as this. The celebration video also helped galvanise the teachers' participation as it provided a performance-based outcome which encouraged their participation. Feedback regarding the celebration video has been extremely positive including from LMS. Pending new permission requests LMS/Hub hope to share this video as part of their 'Music Makes Me' - Music and Wellbeing campaign.

(iv) Feedback from Singing Champions

Feedback from the singing champions was gained through the final online meeting which discussed their experiences of the project prompted by a series of questions. Questions were supported with visual PECS and answer examples given by the MMS Leader where required. Unfortunately, only a small number of singing champions were able to attend this meeting which meant that we were not able to get the feedback we had hoped on the experiences of the youth voice council across the project. Many schools shared their apologies for not being able to attend and issues such as staffing as well as the timeline extension and there being a large gap between meetings impacted attendance.

Alongside attendance issues the structure of this meeting was not as effective as previous meetings and at times participants appeared to find it difficult to share their thoughts and respond to some of the questions. Reasons for this may have included (i) some of the questions we prepared may have been too broad/open and the participants found it difficult to share their ideas (ii) the younger age group of some of the participants and limited experience in considering/discussing topics such as what a musical future may look like (iii) staff support being limited in this meeting (iv) structure of meeting and balance of practical and question-based activities. Future projects may prioritise some in-person meetings and more regular meetings which could develop over time to give participants opportunities to practise feedback and consider ideas in multiple ways.

MMS learnt so much from this process including how we would change our approach to feedback in future projects to support youth voice for all young people. We hope to promote more youth voice leadership opportunities in future music projects with young people involved in multiple areas of the project, guiding its conception, how it might progress, and what might be achieved. Results from Hear Our Voice suggest that when aspiring to achieve and support youth voice leadership opportunities with this cohort (including younger age groups and additional needs) some support systems and structure is needed to ensure success for all participants. Options for clear choice making a balanced structure, practical examples, verbal and visual prompts and examples/options to extend discussion are all needed. The first two meetings fit into this model where feedback was scaffolded, and the meeting format was well balanced.

Despite low attendance and challenges around the meeting structure, feedback received shows participants enthusiasm and enjoyment of being involved in the project, highlighting the need for more opportunities such as this with all young people.

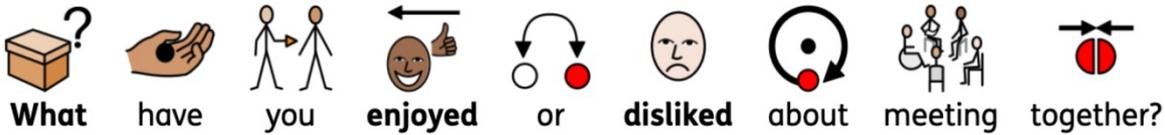
Online Meeting 3: Singing Champion Feedback

Attendance: 5 out of 11 schools

The meeting started and ended by sharing the celebration video which the singing champions really enjoyed. Sharing the video helped to demonstrate the impact of the singing champions choice-making and involvement in the project.

One participant stated that the children ‘seemed like they were having fun’.

A series of feedback questions were then presented, focusing on participant enjoyment and thoughts on choosing songs, the resources, celebration video, meeting together, Makaton, future projects, changes they would make, youth voice and musical opportunities.



All participants shared their enjoyment in choosing songs, were happy with the song choices and would like to be involved in similar projects in the future.

One student was very distracted; therefore we did not gain much feedback in this meeting.

All shared that they enjoyed learning the Makaton, however, it wasn’t clear how much their schools had engaged with the resources and not all singing champions were involved in the celebration video.

The MMS leader was very supportive of the challenges in feeding back for the participants during this meeting and summarised their ideas, providing example prompts to approach some questions. Two questions received no response relating to what other types of music projects would you like to make creative choices for and how this could be supported.

Participant Feedback

One student wanted to involve other children in their school more which would be a great extension of the project: 'I think maybe we should do a concert with the people in choir because they like to, other year groups, also like to sing'

What have you enjoyed / disliked about meeting together?

'I really enjoyed meeting other children. I really enjoyed choosing songs as well.... really fun'

Did you find them useful? (Resources / Makaton)

'Helpful because sometimes I get muddled up'

This example was from a non-SEN participant and highlights the benefits of the inclusion of Makaton in reinforcing learning for all.

(v) Feedback from schools/use of resources

MMS set out to gain feedback from schools on the organisation, planning, resources, and their opinions on the creative aspects of the project, as well as its legacy and thoughts for how the project might continue/evolve. Initially we planned to create a short survey where teachers would be asked for their opinions regarding the impact of the project on their practice, on the students, and how they would like to see the inclusive aspects of the project and singing develop for future initiatives. In the end the survey was more detailed as we felt this was an opportunity to collate in depth feedback that could inform strategic priorities for the Hub, as well as demonstrate what schools would like to access and achieve.

The feedback we received from schools provides example of multiple uses of the resources such as with a class group, across the whole school for singing assemblies or as part of the celebration video. The feedback highlights the benefits of the Hear Our Voice project and the need for further youth voice and inclusive singing opportunities and resources.

Teacher/Schools Feedback
<p>From Surveys</p>
<p>We received surveys relating to 12 schools with 9 surveys being completed as 2 surveys related to multiple schools. 8 surveys were from schools with singing champions.</p> <p>Summary of Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 schools shared the resources with their colleagues - 8 utilised the video resources for teaching the songs - All enjoyed the song selections - All said songs were accessible/inclusive - 8 had used Makaton signing in songs before - Most didn't watch the Makaton training video - 8 said Makaton helped their students learn the pieces - All wanted more singing resources like this in the future - 6 said their students knew about the singing champions and their role in the song selection <p>Feedback on the song selections</p> <p>'The Fanga Alafia song was great and many of the kids connected with it, it was fun, the vocal track was interactive, and I was able to incorporate it into my teaching in various ways e.g., choir and percussion'</p> <p>Feedback on the impact of Makaton</p> <p>'Many of my students use only Makaton or verbal language supported by Makaton to develop speech so signing has been essential for them and others enjoy'</p> <p>'Doing this song also helped me improve my signing skills and it was helpful to gain the extra resources from this project'</p> <p>'It has been good to encourage signing when singing - I will be trying to implement this a bit more'</p> <p>'The use of Makaton signage in singing is useful and if we use it regularly it will become familiar as they go up the years in school- making it easier'</p> <p>Feedback on what schools gained from the project</p> <p>'Engaging repertoire. I think more than me gaining something from the project it has helped show colleagues who sometimes also run classroom music that it's possible to integrate age - and culturally-relevant repertoire into music lessons to enable creativity, instrumental skills and communication. Often they look to songs for younger children as they are seen as "accessible" but actually so is contemporary repertoire, and can be more engaging'</p>

Feedback on impact songs and resources have had on students

‘Every week I go into school the teachers talk to me about how much the kids love the songs’

‘Fanga Alafia was brilliant for engaging students of all ages...’

‘I have heard from other members of staff around the school how some classes are enjoying the songs in their classes’

Overall feedback

‘I think the project has been great. Most children are aware of our singing champion and have asked what they do and can they be one. This has inspired them to give ideas for what they would like to sing and are just generally excited to get back to singing together. Thank you!’

Feedback on developing inclusivity in Lambeth

‘More collaborative work between SEN and mainstream schools and more youth voice - particularly after the isolation and detriment to mental health of the pandemic, and in a borough with social and economic problems, bringing together and connecting children from different communities is powerful’

‘I think the involvement of pupils to make choices has been great idea’

Feedback on improvements if project repeated

‘Longer preparation time perhaps, I would of loved to of involved more kids if I had more time to practise the song with the wider school’

‘I would like my colleagues in SEN schools to have engaged more in the project, particularly those teaching music to their classes ...’

Teacher/Schools Feedback
From Emails
<p>Use of Resources</p> <p>Some settings utilised the resources across the whole school:</p> <p>‘...the staff and children in the whole school are all really enjoying singing the songs. They are fab’</p> <p>‘... I did a survey among staff for feedback about the resources and there was an overwhelmingly positive response. Everyone has really appreciated and enjoyed using them’</p>

Impact of Makaton

'The signing videos were particularly useful, especially to encourage less confident and EAL children (as well as SEN) to join in'

'The children really enjoy the song. The actions and visuals support them'

'The signing video for Lovely day was fabulous and really engaged the children'

Future Requests

'The only real request was would it be possible to have more options for EYFS and KS1?'

'It has had a massive impact on our ability to run a singing assembly in classes, even with less confident teachers, so thank you so much and hoping it will be possible for more'

One teacher shared feedback that they would have loved a performance opportunity tied to the project and more regular meet ups for the singing champions to really explore their role.

(vi) Final steps (ongoing) - exploring legacy of project

The 'Hear Our Voice' pilot project hopes to apply the lessons learnt to further developing inclusive practice across MMS, LMS/Hub and beyond. We hope the feedback received from schools and experiences of the MMS leader and participants will provide tangible examples for further developing youth voice opportunities for young people with additional needs and enable exchange of ideas with non-disabled peers. The resources are also still available for all Lambeth primary and SEN secondary schools to access and we hope to promote the continued use of these resources and may receive further feedback as a result. We will also be meeting with LMS to discuss the project findings and impact they may have on LMS/Hub priorities and will be looking at ways the project and resources can be extended.

Through sharing the findings of this report, we hope to:

- (i) Support continuation of Youth Voice opportunities within MMS, LMS/Hub and beyond including how we could explore this with younger age groups.
- (ii) Work with LMS/Hub to support Youth Voice for young people with additional needs and apply our findings to all programming (e.g., performances, teaching activities, Hub youth council). Project findings could become a core part of how LMS approaches its singing strategy with a focus on inclusive resources and youth voice, providing an extension of current provision.

- (iii) Encourage schools to explore youth voice opportunities e.g., choosing their own singing champions to lead/choose singing activities.
- (iv) Promote the use of Makaton within singing activities in schools and enable teachers to find out signs for themselves and apply them in a way that responds best to the needs of their students.
- (v) Promote inclusive communities: Singing is a great way to get a whole school singing and signing, from teaching staff to students.
- (vi) Develop further inclusive resources for supporting and linking schools.
- (vii) Explore opportunities to investigate the focus areas and activities within the project in more detail.
- (viii) Encourage continued use of the vocal resources within Lambeth and beyond.

Conclusion

Hear Our Voice set out to pilot and explore inclusive practices around youth voice, singing and resources for all young people in Lambeth including those with additional needs. MMS achieved its overall aims providing examples of the benefits of collaborative, inclusive singing opportunities and resources for participants and schools, as well as the limitations and challenges observed within the scope of the project. Results highlight the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the participants, the demand from schools for singing support, and the need for further opportunities and exploration in these areas. MMS hopes the findings of the Hear Our Voice project will help to develop future practice within MMS and LMS/Hub, and support other organisations in how they may approach similar projects.

Music Making SENSE

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