



Class singing – St. Peter's Brafferton

Class (Reception/ Year 1)

During a weekly informal class, the school's youngest pupils explore their singing voices. The class also includes a small group of older children from Helperbees.

I aim to encourage the children to enjoy singing, while fostering a basic awareness of pitch and pulse. Repertoire includes counting and cumulative songs; songs relating to celebrations throughout the year (including songs for their Nativity play); songs and chants from around the world, and in other languages (e.g. Maori, Punjabi, Polish); call and response and mirror/echo songs; nursery rhymes; songs related to topic work. The children are able to clap rhythms and describe how melodies rise and fall and make patterns. They might discuss simple dynamics (loud/soft) and articulation ("choppy"/"rainbow" singing). During warm-ups, the children are encouraged to use different vocal timbres, change tempo or dynamics and think about simple vocal technique and posture.

Class Two (Year 2/3)

As the children progress through the school, singing lessons become more formal in structure and aim to encourage confident, well-pitched singers. Lessons begin with warm-ups or vocal exercises to explore range, vocal timbre, dynamics and tempo. These might include discussions about vocal technique, using appropriate terms. Song repertoire includes round-singing (starting with two parts and becoming more complex through the year) and quodlibets; traditional/folk song; songs from musicals; celebrations and the seasons (e.g. Christingle) In addition to rounds, the children enjoy some simple part-singing. Their increasing musical vocabulary allows them to describe a greater range of dynamics (pp,p,mp,mf,f,ff, crescendo, diminuendo), tempo (lento/allegro) and articulation (staccato/legato). Songs are mainly learnt by rote, but sometimes the children use lyric sheets. They are able to discuss how posture affects their singing and how to engage an audience in their performance. During the summer term, the children take part in the end of year production.

Class Three (Year 4/5/6)

The school's oldest students enjoy lessons which are increasingly challenging. Technical warm-ups extend their ranges and use of register. In addition to the vocabulary learnt in Class 2, the children are encouraged to discuss major and minor modes; changes of tempo, using terms such as ritardando and accelerando; the use of projection and healthy technique. This year, the children enjoyed learning a wide range of repertoire for a trip to Young Voices in Sheffield, encompassing rock and pop, folk song (including a song in Welsh) and the poetry of Spike Milligan! This was especially valuable for a cohort who have missed

out on many communal experiences during lockdown and they really enjoyed being part of a massed choir, working with a band and a conductor.

In addition to using lyric sheets or teaching songs using call and response, I introduce vocal scores. We have recently introduced descant parts to songs, and have also sung songs in other languages such as Spanish. The children have sung confidently during Harvest and Christingle services. They look forward to taking part in the summer production and several older children are keen to have roles which require them to sing solo.

Throughout their journey through St. Peter's, the children have enjoyed a broad repertoire of songs and knowledge about singing and music to carry through into their various secondary schools.

Judith Laity (Singing Teacher)

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