



Introduction to the Diocese of Salford's Singing Programme

'Evangelisation Through Singing'

The Diocese of Salford is pleased to announce the expansion of the Cathedral's grassroots Music Foundation as part of the National Schools Singing Programme. The development has been made possible by generous funding from the Hamish Ogston Foundation and will see the Cathedral Music Department work with schools from across the Diocese to embed a high-quality singing programme within each school comprising of regular whole-class singing sessions and after-school choirs.

The programme is led by the Cathedral Director of Music, Alex Patterson, who has over ten years' experience in delivering high quality singing sessions to children and young people both in and outside school settings. Alex will be assisted by a new Choral Director to be recruited this autumn.

How does it work?

Weekly sessions take place during the normal school day and are tailored to suit each class and year group. They include music for school liturgies blended with interactive music education games and secular repertoire. Classes support the national curriculum and enhance education attainment and progression. Sacred content nurtures children's faith and flows into the worshipping life of the school and parish. Choral Directors will liaise with schools to ensure sessions provide music for schools' collective worship.

A network of after-school choirs will also be established in areas across the Diocese to support both parish and cathedral liturgies. As well as enhancing the in-school experience of musical education, the programme engages with wider community with concerts and performances that all can enjoy.

Why singing?

Singing is uniquely accessible for all kinds of people. It's a form of music making that offers a whole range of individual and social benefits to both those who are performing and those who are listening. It is a great way to express faith, supports social cohesion, has many mental health benefits, encourages expression, as well as furthering academic attainment. The model of class-based music education and interaction with wider society offers schools a fantastic opportunity to better support their students and community.

Why is it important?

The educational, social, and health benefits of children's choral singing are well documented. In areas of the greatest economic deprivation, parents and teachers alike have been delighted at children's increased confidence, engagement, and academic attainment. They've seen children's improvements in literacy, numeracy, teamwork as well as a deeper and lasting relationship with their Catholic faith.

The open-access model of whole-class singing produces demonstrable diversity in take up of after-school choir places. This allows great inclusion for all, unlocking aspirations and broadening horizons across social, academic and cultural divides. These after-school choirs further develop children's life in the Church, contributing to liturgical music in their parishes and schools.

What about the curriculum?

The Diocese is fully engaged with colleagues from across the National Schools Singing Programme, which has a clear and readily deliverable model of whole class singing. Drawing from years of experience, reflection, and external advice, we provide sessions that really engage students. A comprehensive singing curriculum for use by Catholic schools is currently being developed as part of the new national initiative. These programmes combine faith themes and instruction with clear modules and deliver as much of the National Curriculum for music as possible.

With input from a number of nationally recognised curriculum and vocal experts this new model will provide:

- Outstanding quality-first teaching which is essential in music delivery to schools.
- A set of core faith and music curriculum modules, with recommended musical content and suggested teaching plans.
- An overview of best practice in leading whole class singing, vocal technique, pedagogy, and reward / behaviour management.
- Guidance for sharing reporting, musical assessment and planning efficiently with schools.
- Guidance and suggested training sessions for choral directors to deliver to school staff, enabling them to reinforce good vocal practice in school and further enrich the paid-for provision, supported by our extensive digital resources.
- Advice and a range of models for starting, recruiting for and developing after-school choirs.

Find out more

Schools interested in taking part in the School Singing Programme should contact Alex Patterson alex.patterson@dioceseofsalford.org.uk in the first instance for more information.