

Sing Song - 1/48/O

Group A

Note: In the tables below, The numbers will not necessarily add up laterally to the total n. This is because some children will register in more than one category as, for example "Pitch flat" and "Isolated wrong notes".

Pitch characteristics, Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1, Year 4

Description:

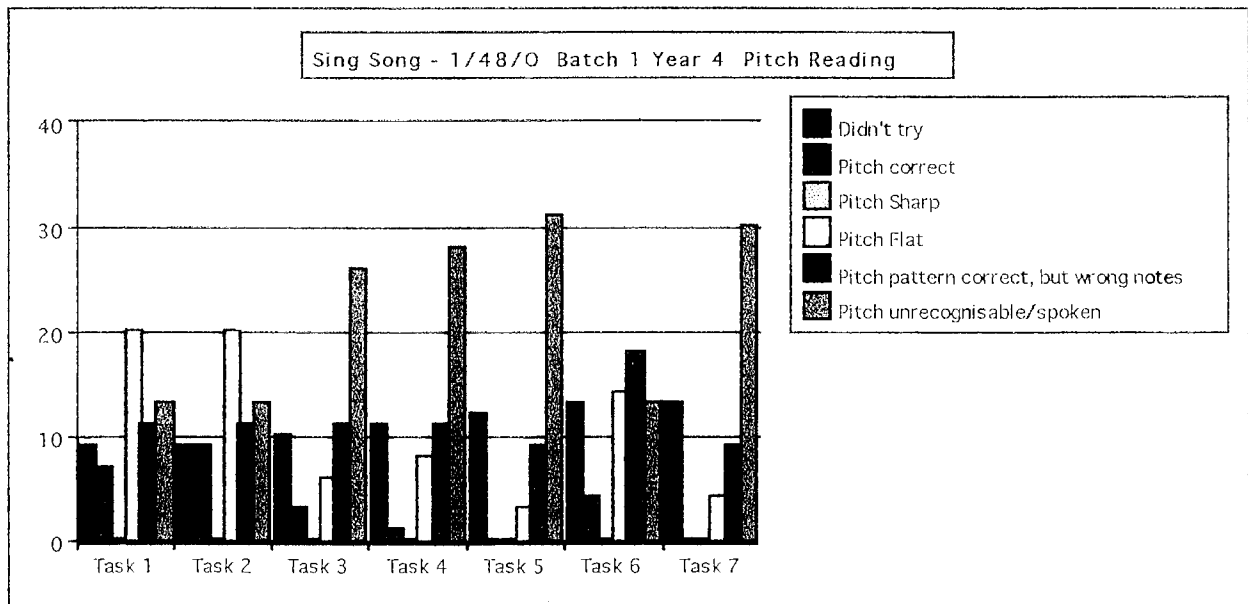
Pitch characteristics in the taped performances were noted as follows:

- The pitch of the melody is sung accurately
- It is at a wrong tessitura (flat or sharp)
- Some notes are wrong while the general tune is recognisable. Examples of this are -
 - (1) the melodic contour is contracted, i.e. lower notes are sharpened and/or higher notes flattened
 - (2) mispitched note(s) put out subsequent pitch accuracy
 - (3) individual notes are mispitched
- Pitch is unrecognisable in relation to the given tune, or is spoken

The findings of the first batch are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1 Year 4 Pitch reading n = 54

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch Sharp	Pitch Flat	Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable/spoken
Task 1	9	7	0	20	11	13
Task 2	9	9	0	20	11	13
Task 3	10	3	0	6	11	26
Task 4	11	1	0	8	11	28
Task 5	12	0	0	3	9	31
Task 6	13	4	0	14	18	13
Task 7	13	0	0	4	9	30



Comments:

1. Children who *didn't try* the first task remained in that category throughout, others joining them as the tasks increased in difficulty
2. A very small proportion sang the pitch of even the simplest of the tunes correctly, tasks 4, 5 and 7 being found particularly difficult
3. The virtual absence of children who sang sharp, but the large number that sang flat is noteworthy. This is made worse when it is recognised that the decrease in the *Pitch flat* category in tasks 3, 4, 5 and 7 is mainly a result of the large proportion in the *Pitch unrecognisable/spoken* category - mostly at least 50%. I propose that the reason is simply inexperience in singing, and the lack of accurate models at home or at school. Related to this is that what singing experience most children have had will have been in groups, whereas the NEMP tasks required them to sing solo. However, this seems to go contrary to the findings of Goetze (1986) who found that primary children are more likely to sing in tune individually than in a group. Their lack of experience in this was evident in the large number who displayed embarrassment, even to the degree of incapacitation at having to sing alone. The large number of children who sing at a lower pitch is indicative of lack of confidence in most cases, rather than that they have natural low voice levels.
4. The children placed in *Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes* category ranged from those who sang just one wrong note to those who sang most notes wrong, but who retained some sense of pitch pattern. This category is that into which even relatively experienced singers would fall when sight reading. It is, of course, common to make a mistake or two, and subsequently correct it. It should be observed that many children in this category were also in the *Pitch flat* category.

5. Many children gave up early in the tasks and either sang on a monotone or simply spoke the words. The latter were mainly those who had difficulty reading the words, indicating that they could not cope with the double problem of reading the words and singing the tune, so cut off one, and tried to cope with the other. Virtually no children in the samples gave up on the words and sang the tune on a single syllable. Note should be taken of Sue Braatveld's comments in the first paragraph of the Conclusion in her Thesis (page 44). The problem of coping simultaneously with rhythm, pitch and words in sight singing at primary school level is one about which there has been very little research, though a number of texts on teaching singing at primary school have good advice founded on successful experience.

Rhythm characteristics, Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1 Year 4

Description:

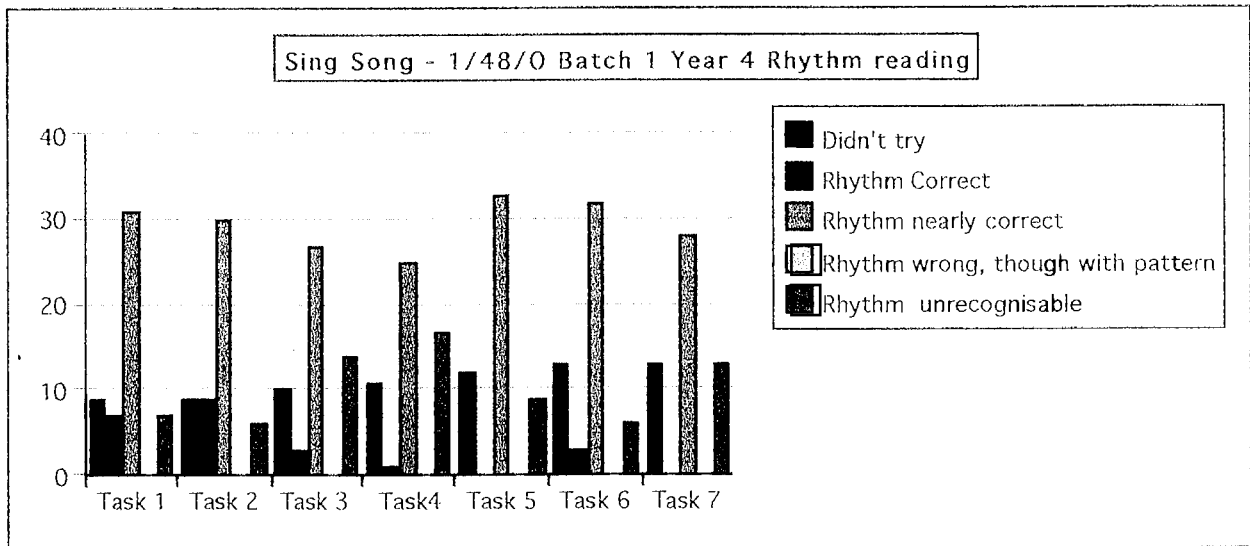
Rhythm characteristics in the taped performances were noted as follows:

- The rhythm is sung accurately
- It is generally correct, but with some inaccuracy
- Rhythm is unrecognisable.

The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1 Year 4 Rhythm reading n = 54

	Didn't try	Rhythm Correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, though with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
Task 1	9	7	31	0	7
Task 2	9	9	30	0	6
Task 3	10	3	27	0	14
Task 4	11	1	25	0	17
Task 5	12	0	33	0	9
Task 6	13	3	32	0	6
Task 7	13	0	28	0	13



Comments:

1. The *Didn't try* category is the same as for table 1.
2. Few children got the rhythm fully accurate, and it can be seen that the numbers with *Pitch accurate* are almost identical. Not revealed in the tables is the fact that it was the same children who were correct in pitch as in rhythm. This suggests that accuracy in the one generates accuracy in the other. The same results appear in Batch 2, Year 4 and in Year 8.
3. *Rhythm nearly correct* covers those who made isolated errors, or perhaps were hesitant in singing or speaking a generally accurate rhythm. The words of most of the tasks could suggest their own rhythms. In such cases the children didn't necessarily sight read musically, but verbally.
4. *Rhythm wrong, but with pattern* aimed to identify those who failed to sing or speak the rhythms as given in the task, but who sang or spoke an identifiable rhythmic pattern of their own. The zero result for each task speaks for itself.
5. Many of those who sang or spoke in unrecognisable rhythms were those who could make no sense of the words. These tended to be children with very incomplete understanding of English.

Sing Song 1/48/O, Batch 1 Year 4 Totals

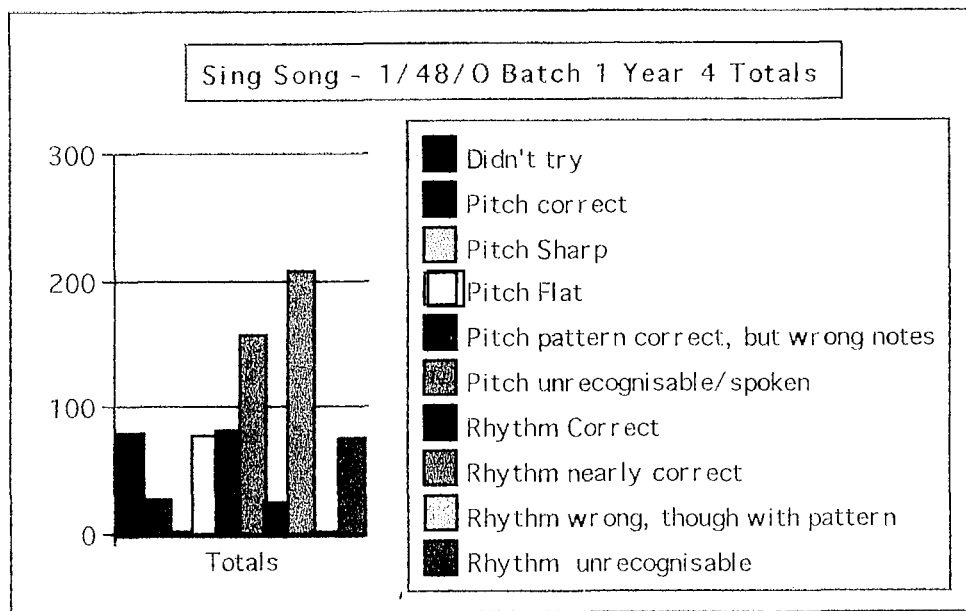
Description:

Table 3 offers a convenient overall comparison of the various pitch and rhythmic factors. Taking the possible maximum total in any category as 378 (n x (the number of tasks))

Table 3 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1 Year 4 Totals n = 54

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch Sharp	Pitch Flat	Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable /spoken
Totals	77	24	0	75	80	154

Rhythm Correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, though with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
23	206	0	72



Comments:

1. By adding *Rhythm correct* and *Rhythm nearly correct*, it can be seen that more than double the number of children could read the rhythm factor than the pitch dimension (obtained by adding *Pitch correct* to *Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes*). This is roughly consistent with the NEMP results.
2. The proportion of those whose attempts at pitch and rhythm respectively were unrecognisable is also about 1:2.

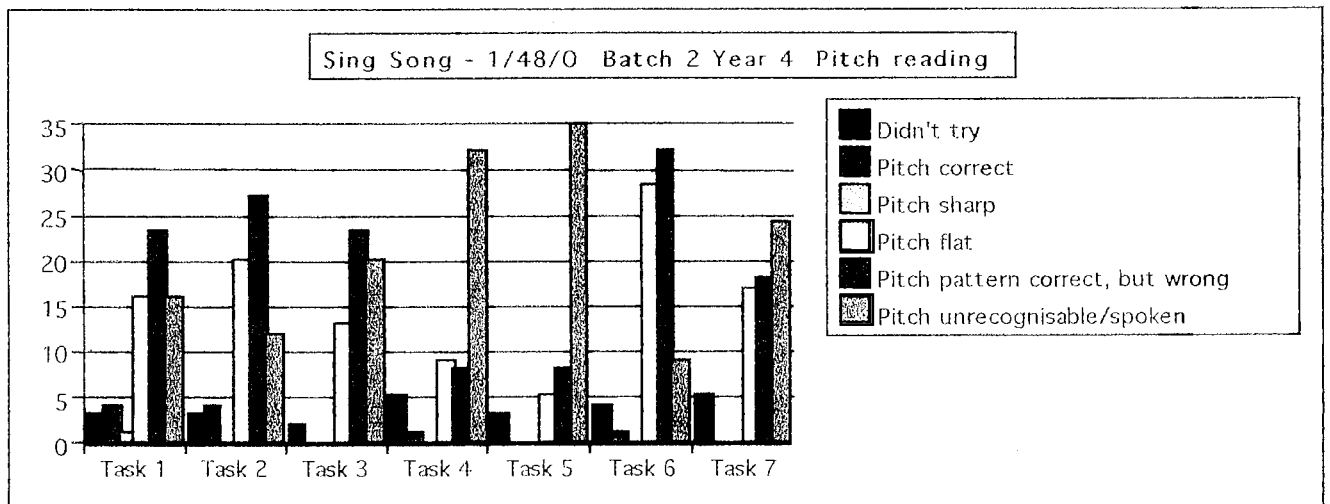
Pitch characteristics, Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 2, Year 4

Description:

Because of some concern that the first sample was insufficient to produce a reliable result, a second batch of tapes was requested. They were viewed on the same basis as described for Batch 1.

Table 4 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 2 Year 4 Pitch Reading n = 46

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch sharp	Pitch flat	Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable/spoken
Task 1	3	4	1	16	23	16
Task 2	3	4	0	20	27	12
Task 3	2	0	0	13	23	20
Task 4	5	1	0	9	8	32
Task 5	3	0	0	5	8	35
Task 6	4	1	0	28	32	9
Task 7	5	0	0	17	18	24



Comments:

A comparison of the results tends to confirm the general pattern obtained from Batch 1, so are not addressed in any detail here. However, it is notable that fewer children didn't try the tasks; but then, fewer did them correctly pitch-wise. Again the difficulty they found in tasks 4, 5 and 7 is notable, while the smaller number of *Pitch unrecognisable/spoken* in task 6 is counterbalanced by the high number of *Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes*. Many children seemed to light up at this task, as a song with which they were familiar, and could sing, albeit imperfectly.

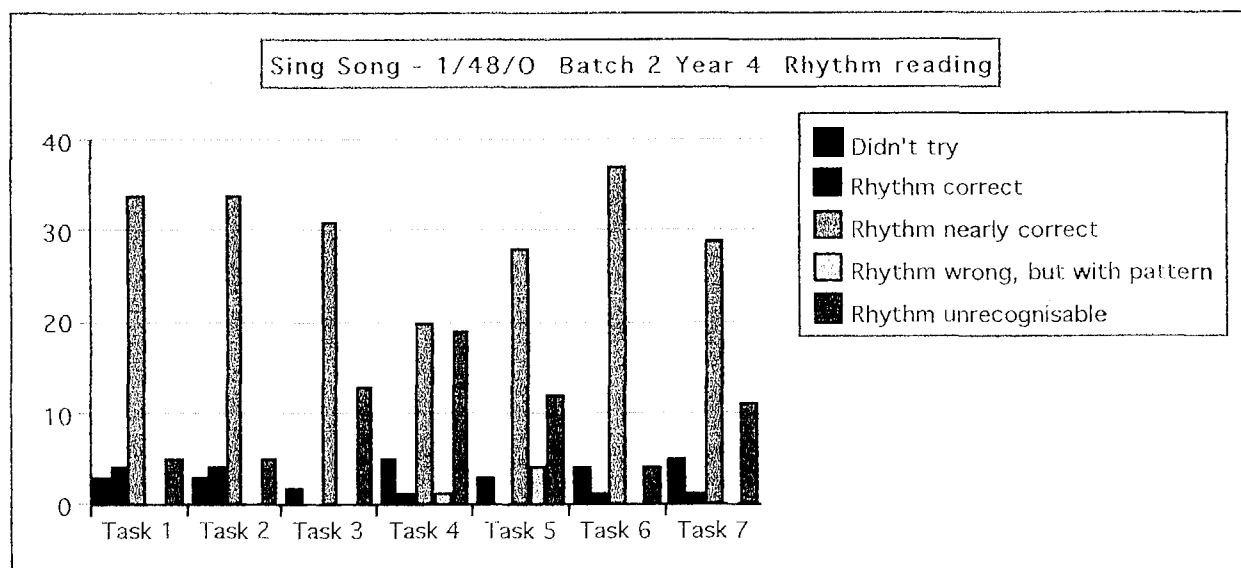
Rhythm characteristics, Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 1 Year 4

Description:

As with Pitch characteristics above.

Table 5 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 2 Year 4 Rhythm reading n = 46

	Didn't try	Rhythm correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, but with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
Task 1	3	4	34	0	5
Task 2	3	4	34	0	5
Task 3	2	0	31	0	13
Task 4	5	1	20	1	19
Task 5	3	0	28	4	12
Task 6	4	1	37	0	4
Task 7	5	1	29	0	11



Comments:

Again, a general similarity of the results to those of Batch 1 is apparent, a smaller number singing the rhythm accurately, but with a correspondingly larger getting the rhythm nearly correct.

Pitch and Rhythm Characteristics, Sing Song 1/48/O, Batch 1 Year 4 Totals

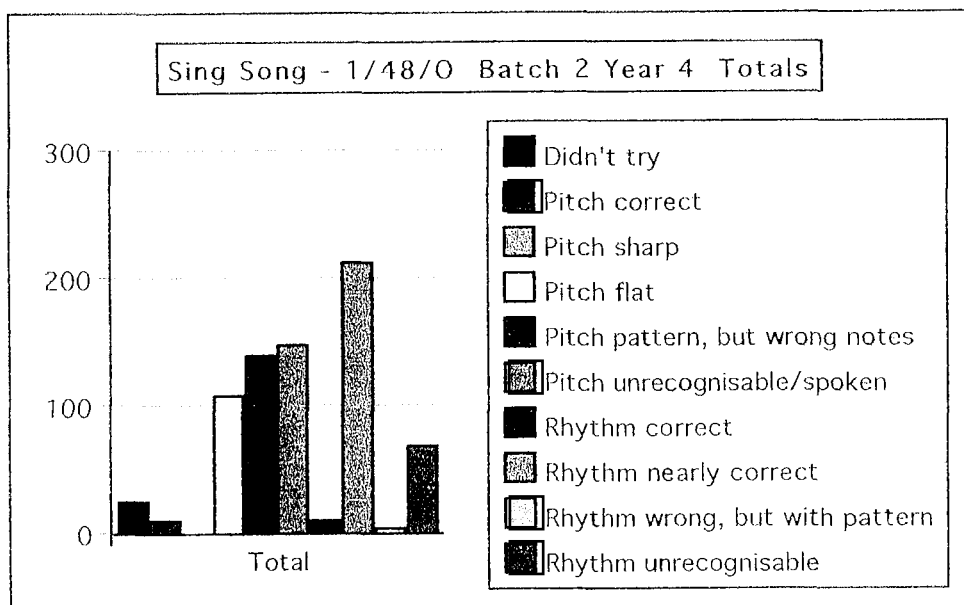
Description:

The overall comparison of the various pitch and rhythmic factors is presented for Batch 2. The possible maximum total in any category here is 322 (n x (the number of tasks)).

Table 6 - Sing Song 1/48/O Batch 2 Year 4 Totals n = 46

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch sharp	Pitch flat	Pitch pattern, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable /spoken
Total	25	10	1	108	139	148

Rhythm correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, but with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
10	213	5	69



Comments:

The overall pattern of results is similar to that obtained for Batch 1, but with a decrease in the *Pitch correct* category, counterbalanced by a considerable increase in *Pitch pattern, but wrong notes*,

Pitch Characteristics as Revealed in Combined Batches 1 & 2, Sing Song 1/48/O Year 4

Description:

The differences of batches 1 and 2 are evened out when the two are combined in tables 7, 8 and 9.

Table 7 - Sing Song 1/48/O Combined Batches 1 & 2 Year 4 Pitch readingn = 100

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch Sharp	Pitch Flat	Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable/spoken
Task 1	12	11	1	36	34	29
Task 2	12	13	0	40	38	25
Task 3	12	3	0	19	34	46
Task 4	16	2	0	17	19	60
Task 5	15	0	0	8	17	66
Task 6	17	5	0	42	50	22
Task 7	18	0	0	21	27	54

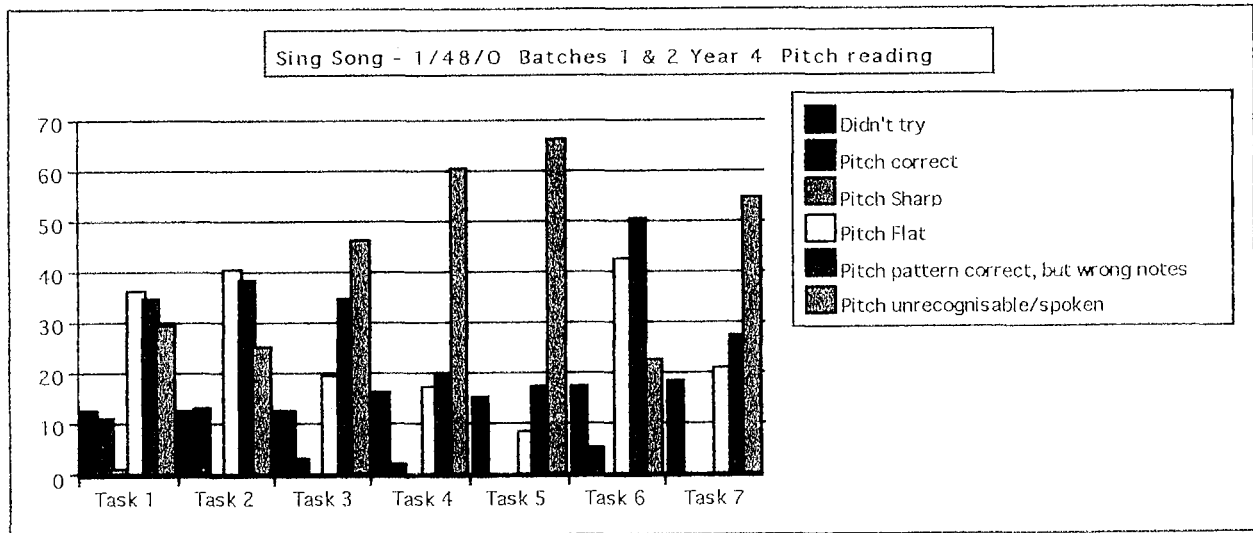


Table 8 - Sing Song 1/48/O Combined Batches 1 & 2 Year 4 Rhythm reading n = 100

	Didn't try	Rhythm Correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, though with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
Task 1	12	11	65	0	12
Task 2	12	13	64	0	11
Task 3	12	3	58	0	27
Task 4	16	2	45	1	36
Task 5	15	0	61	4	21
Task 6	17	4	69	0	10
Task 7	18	1	57	0	24

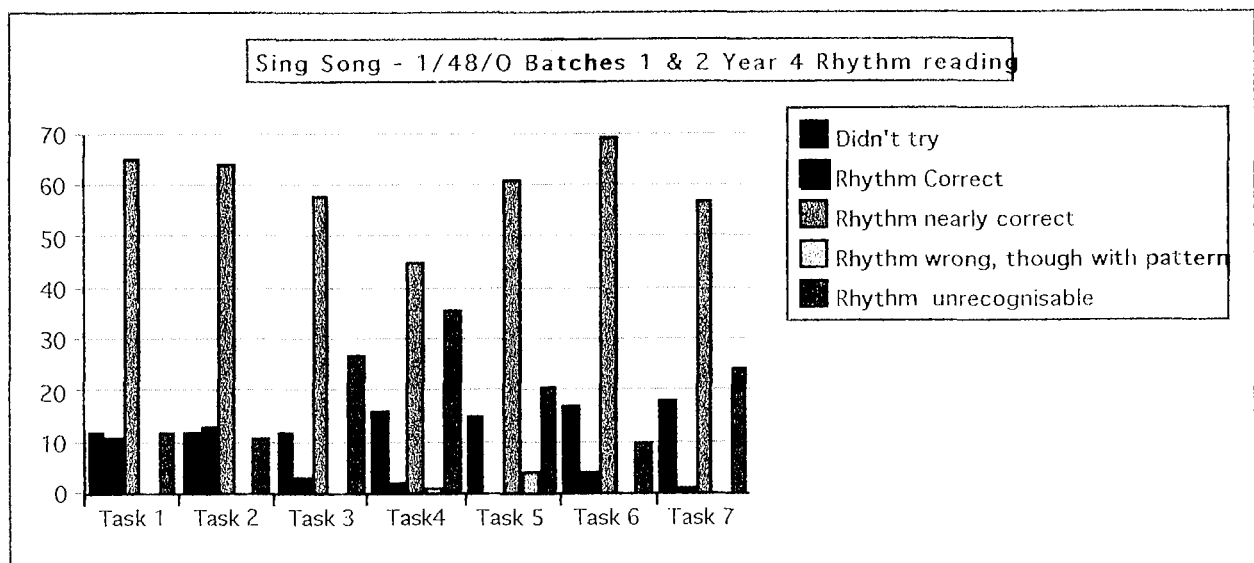
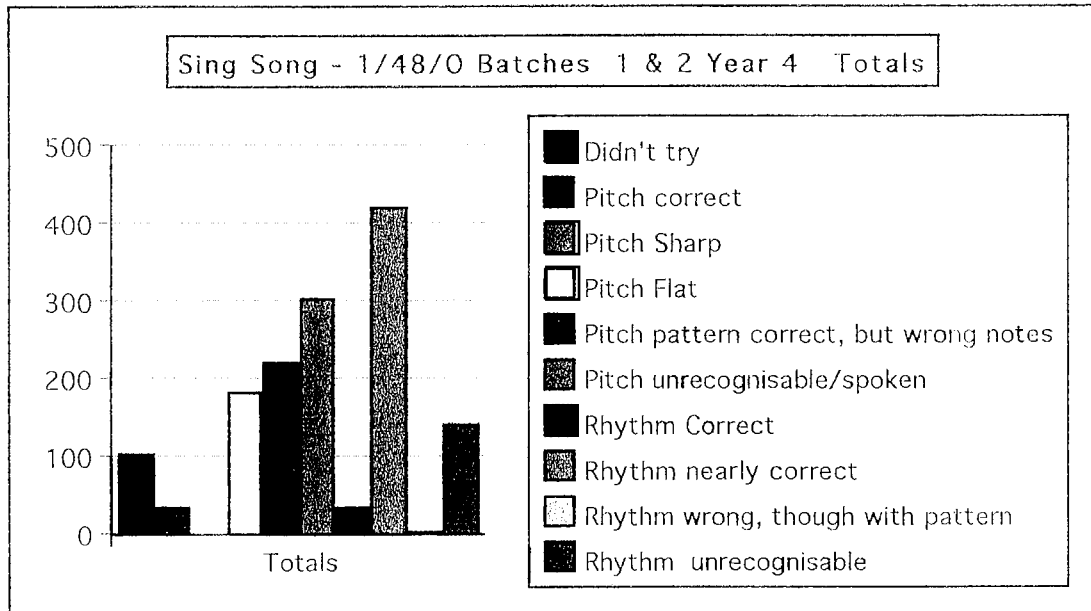


Table 9 - Sing Song 1/48/O Combined Batches 1 & 2 Year 4 Totals n = 100

	Didn't try	Pitch correct	Pitch Sharp	Pitch Flat	Pitch pattern correct, but wrong notes	Pitch unrecognisable /spoken
Totals	102	34	1	183	219	302

Rhythm Correct	Rhythm nearly correct	Rhythm wrong, though with pattern	Rhythm unrecognisable
33	419	5	141



Comments:

This overall picture of the 20% sample of Sing Song illustrates most clearly the dominance of the rhythm factor. It also shows how few children performed the pitch and rhythm elements accurately, and that rhythm, correct or nearly correct was greatly superior to pitch, correct, or partly correct. The pitch of nearly 50% of the children was unrecognisable or spoken. Add to this the 102 in the *Didn't try* category, and a negative pitch result was 57% of all the tasks performances, compared with 34% negative rhythm result.