



competition aimed at raising awareness of modern slavery.

St Hilda's Church of England Primary School in Prestwich, and Merrill Academy in Derby have won recording sessions in a professional studio for their versions of The Freedom Song, written to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst children and young people.

The schools were victorious in a nationwide competition launched last year by The Clewer Initiative, the Church of England's response to modern slavery, in which schools were invited to write and arrange their own versions of the song.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, congratulated the schools on their win. He said: "A big well done to the two schools who have won The Clewer Initiative's Freedom Song competition.

"Their entries showed that they have learned about modern slavery and are now passionately singing to raise awareness of the injustice of this crime. My prayer is that they keep raising their voices, singing for the freedom of those who have been silenced."

Bishop Alastair Redfern, who chairs The Clewer Initiative, said: "Congratulations to the two schools who are our competition winners.

"The energy and passion that they put into their entries was infectious. I hope winning the Freedom Song competition will encourage them to keep singing for freedom for all: in their communities and across the world."

Paul Beedle, Acting Headteacher of Merrill Academy said "To win this national competition is incredibly exciting and we hope our version of the Freedom Song will inspire and empower others to take up the fight against modern slavery.

"The great Beethoven said 'Music can change the world because it can change people.' We believe this initiative will change many lives and we are honoured to be part of it.

"Everyone associated with Merrill Academy is extremely proud of the Melody Makers and their meteoric journey since 2016. To win this National Award is absolutely amazing and testament to the Melody Makers, the support from parents/carers and the team of staff who work with them."

Rachel Senior, headteacher of St Hilda's School said "We are absolutely delighted that our song has been chosen. During the writing process, the children learnt so much about slavery and were horrified that, sadly, it is still happening today. They want people to enjoy listening to their song and appreciate the message of comfort and hope it brings: 'We see you' and you are not alone."

The Freedom Song was written by the [Just Enough Group](#) Founder Phil Knight to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst children and young people. In the competition, schools were free to re-write the words and make the song their own.

The judges were particularly impressed with the new lyrics that St Hilda's School had written, and praised the innovative arrangement by Merrill Academy's choir, the Merrill Melody Makers.

Each school has won a session in a professional recording studio to record their version of the Freedom Song, as well as £1000 in Just Enough vouchers for their school.

Further information:

The Freedom Song competition was announced together with the release of a collection of modern slavery schools resources all available for free from www.modernslaveryeducation.com. With lesson plans for five key stages and collective worship materials for Primary and Secondary schools, the resources and the song – including the new versions recorded by the competition winners - are a key step in enabling all of the UK's young people to become courageous advocates calling for an end to modern slavery.

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