THEIR vocals turned 'Another Brick in the Wall' into a hit but 25 years later the children of Islington Green School, in north London, have returned to claim royalties.

A progressive music teacher sneaked the fourth-form choir out of lessons in 1979 to sing at a local recording studio with the band Pink Floyd. The rebellious anthem, with its key line, "We don't need no education," became a worldwide hit and the subsequent double album, 'The Wall', sold 12 million copies.

David Gilmour, the Pink Floyd guitarist, amassed a €110m fortune. The school received a €1,500 cheque. The children were unpaid and anonymous.

Now, thanks to website Friends Reunited, the class of 1979 has gathered to pursue a claim for thousands of pounds of unpaid royalties from British and international air play.

A change in copyright law in 1996 means that the former choirboys are entitled to payment as session musicians. The Performing Artists' Media Rights Association (PAMRA), which distributes royalty payments, said that it would start making payments to former pupils who can prove that they sang on the record.

Securing evidence is proving a challenge for Peter Rowan, a music royalties expert who is helping the choir. "there is no paperwork from the session or with EMI confirming the names of the pupils and we have to prove each child sang."

Peter Thorpe, one of the singers, said: "We were just taken to the studios and it was great fun. I didn't realise royalties were owed and I'm very glad to be in a position to claim them."(© The Times, London)

Adam Sherwin
in London