



Director of Music



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

Welcome from the Headmistress

Hello and thank you for showing an interest in working at St Helen and St Katharine. I am enormously proud of this great girls' school, and I know that this sentiment is shared by colleagues across the staff body.

The students are at the heart of this energy and positive ethos. They are wonderful to work with; enthusiastic, clever, funny, kind, silly, earnest and possessed of an unselfconscious enjoyment of learning and the pleasure of finding out more. They are excited by subjects and delight in their teachers demonstrating their ongoing love of a specialist discipline. They, and their parents, also look to us to work in support of personal development and we continue to evolve our pastoral systems to meet the challenges that the students will encounter in school, in Higher Education and in the world of work and adult life.

Our extra- and supra- curricular programmes are busy and exciting. There is an expectation that students will be busy and that opportunities will be created to harness their enthusiasm. Opportunities to learn beyond the classroom are vital and staff involvement in trips and expeditions is expected.

We have a fantastic support team in these endeavours, and all staff members are valued in whatever role they play in keeping things on track, happy and purposeful. Each staff team reflects the pride we feel collectively in our school.

Our work takes place on a beautifully developed and maintained campus and we are fortunate in the working environment we occupy. The stunning Benedict Building, which houses our sixth form, has further enhanced the site and provides space for even more opportunities for both students and staff, as we develop these for ourselves and in partnership with local schools.

We are fortunate to be over-subscribed and, therefore, selective at each student entry point, but we are not a place that likes to rest on laurels and our departments continually reflect on how they can develop things further. The staff community is very supportive.

We enjoy a very positive relationship with our parent body and don't take for granted their advocacy for St Helen's as a school of choice for a daughter. We have a broad catchment area for a day school with a transport network that spans six counties.

Our Board of Governors is very supportive and interested in the work that we do. They ask challenging questions and delight in our many successes. They have overseen a significant development of the estate and provision in recent years and want to ensure that momentum continues. To that end, we welcome ambitious and energetic applicants who share in the excitement of our mission and who want to develop their careers, working with outstanding students and colleagues.

I do hope that you will apply. St Helen's is a school which both builds on the finest elements of great girls' education and challenges itself to deliver an education that allows our students to encounter their 'now' with confidence and pleasure.

It is a great place to work.



Mrs Rebecca Dougall
Headmistress





The School

As one of the leading independent schools in the country, St Helen and St Katharine is an exciting place to work and appointing the very best staff is integral to our success.

St Helen's School was founded in 1903 and was then joined in 1938 by St Katharine's in Wantage. The School is located on a single campus-style site of beautiful Edwardian and modern buildings set in 22 acres of grounds, on the outskirts of Abingdon, some six miles from Oxford. An extensive school bus network facilitates a large student catchment area that includes Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire.

St Helen's is a school where success is celebrated but not revered. Our students achieve excellent academic results, and our goal is to ensure that every girl achieves success as she defines it, so that she can believe in herself, her talents and abilities, and so that she will feel prepared and equipped for life beyond school.

The School is a thriving community of girls and young women aged 9 to 18 years including a small Junior Department comprising one Year 5 and one Year 6 class. St Helen's offers students an outstanding academic education and a rich and varied life beyond the classroom including excellence in sport, the creative and performing arts and a superb range of extracurricular clubs and societies.

We enjoy collaboration with a range of local partner schools, including Radley College, Abingdon, Larkmead, John Mason and Fitzharrys, providing opportunities to enrich the developmental journeys of our students and build positive connections across genders and experiences.

In 2023, we opened the doors to our new sixth form centre, the Benedict Building. The Benedict Building is a physical articulation of the School's vision for Sixth Form – to create an environment for our students that will spark their intellectual spirit and imagination – and provides students with the space and opportunity to grow their academic and extracurricular interests in readiness for the future.

The staff

St Helen and St Katharine is a very special place to work.

Our students are at the heart of everything we do, we celebrate our powerful sense of community, and we take pride in our very high standards and the strength of our performance. We enjoy a working environment and a culture within the School which focuses on development, inclusion and the pleasure of working all together.

We are always looking at ways to develop our people – students and staff. We look to be progressive, imaginative and respectful; we combine the best of long tradition with a commitment to readying our people for the challenges of the 21st Century. We also firmly believe that a diverse workforce is a better workforce which will help us develop ideas, solve problems and ultimately grow St Helen and St Katharine. Our campus is beautiful and an inspiring place to work. The young people we work with are remarkable and the staff community is welcoming, committed and compassionate.

Every day is different at St Helen and St Katharine. It's fast-paced but never loses sight of the value of individualised conversations and the need for support. We take our commitment to the well-being of staff very seriously and we offer the resources and training to allow people to flourish professionally.

The contribution of every member of the staff team is valued at St Helen and St Katharine, and teaching and support staff work closely together, appreciative of the positive difference everyone can make in their varied roles.





The role

As a consequence of the retirement of the current Director of Music, we wish to appoint a permanent, full-time Director of Music from September 2025.

This is an outstanding and exciting opportunity for an inspiring and dedicated professional to build on the great success of an outstanding long-serving predecessor and work with the superlative resource that is the students and music staff at St Helen and St Katharine.

The role would suit a well-qualified and experienced musician who has a vision for the place of music within the life of the School, a track record in the successful implementation of such a strategy and who is keen to develop further outstanding provision. They will have a successful track record of directing choral and/or instrumental ensembles in large and small scale performances and will have some experience of middle-management.

Excellent keyboard skills are a prerequisite, but musicians with all specialisms will be considered. Teaching is across the age range from Year 5 through to A level.

All teaching staff are expected to contribute to the pastoral and enrichment programmes of the School. All staff share the responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the students, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The department

The Director of Music is supported by an Assistant Director of Music, seven part-time Heads of Section (Wind, Strings, Keyboard, Singing, Choirs, Band and Pop) and approximately 30 other visiting instrumental teachers. Some 400 individual lessons are given each week, covering all the major instrumental areas including harp, percussion and singing. The department has an administrator.

The Director of Music, working with the School Organist, is responsible for the music which supports the religious life of the School, both routine assemblies and at the special services which occur throughout the year. Chapel Choir is one of the great jewels of the School, and the postholder will work closely with the School Chaplain.

Music is part of the academic curriculum for all students prior to Year 9 at which point it becomes an option. The courses combine the more traditional components of theory, singing and music appreciation, with class instrumental and group composition work exploring a range of compositional techniques in Western Classical, World, Jazz and Popular music. There is a good selection of classroom percussion (pitched and unpitched) and there are electronic keyboards of various kinds. Students are entered for Edexcel GCSE and AQA A level examinations and the School hosts termly practical examinations of the ABRSM.

Classroom teaching is shared between the Director, Assistant Director and Music Teachers, as is direction of extra-curricular ensembles. A substantial amount of accompanying for performances and examinations will also be required. However, different opportunities for teaching and performance direction will almost certainly emerge through the strengths of the new appointee and, where possible, every encouragement will be given to them to develop their area of interest.

All members of the music staff enjoy a very convivial and hard-working atmosphere, where everyone is drawn into the creative life of the department as much as possible. Music serves the school community in many ways and the successful candidate will find a vigorously stimulating environment requiring musicianship, energy, leadership and imagination.

Facilities

The Music Department benefits from use of substantial and well-equipped performance spaces throughout the School. The department has a range of rooms available for its academic and instrumental teaching and there is a music technology room.

The main school hall, used for many functions, was designed for concerts and theatre productions and houses a full-sized Yamaha CF3 concert grand piano, as well as an electric organ. In the Chapel there is a small 3-manual Harrison and Harrison organ.

Role details

Reporting to the Senior Deputy Head, the Director of Music is responsible for the profile and standards for all aspects of music provision. The postholder will line manage and quality assure the work of the Assistant Director of Music.

The Director of Music will ensure that music curriculum and teaching are stimulating across the age and ability range and will be responsible for fostering an enthusiastic atmosphere within the department which leads to inspiring opportunities for students and colleagues. The Director of Music will seek to grow these opportunities both within and beyond St Helen's e.g. through involvement in competitions and music tours.

In addition to the general duties of a teacher at St Helen and St Katharine the specific responsibilities are:

Strategic planning and development

- Contribute to whole School policy-making and strategic planning as required by the Head.
- Prepare, monitor and update annual departmental plans in consultation with colleagues.
- Take the lead in ensuring that School policies and strategies are embedded in schemes of work and departmental plans.
- Shape and deliver a dynamic and comprehensive musical provision that aligns with the ethos of the School.
- Advocate for the importance of the Performing Arts and Music, in particular, in wider society and in Higher Education and career planning

Departmental management and development

- Be sensitive to and ambitious for the role of Music in the School and its reputation and promote the musical life of the school in all its aspects.
- Foster an atmosphere in which all members of the Music department can feel part of the team and of the School.
- Have overall responsibility for the performance (practical and academic) of students in Music.
- Produce an annual departmental development plan for the future development of the subject within the School.
- Contribute to the appointment of new staff as required.
- Develop programmes of study in music and quality assure their delivery.
- Have oversight of the tracking of student progress in curriculum music, including reviewing and analysing public examination performance.
- Advocate for the subject as an option at GCSE and A level, representing it in meetings and in documentation.





- Plan, implement and review the extra-curricular programme offered by the department, including the directing of ensembles and weekly rehearsals.
- Working with the Music Administrator, ensure that records of attendance are maintained for clubs and activities.
- Accompany students in concerts, festivals, examinations and competitions.
- Manage the Heads of Instrumental Section and the team of visiting music teachers and oversee all aspects of their work.
- Work with Heads of Instrumental Sections and the department administrator to allocate students to visiting music teachers when requests for lessons are received.
- Working with HR, advertise and interview for vacancies amongst the visiting music teachers.
- Liaise between visiting music teachers and the Director of Finance and Operations regarding facilities charges for private music lessons.
- Organise the staff review procedures in the department.
- Work with the Heads of Instrumental Sections to organise activities, including off-site visits, to extend and enrich students in performance opportunities. These include the current programme of concerts, events and services.
- Ensure the safety of students within departmental areas and on trips and visits in accordance with School policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all resources are well maintained and available for use.
- Prepare and keep within an annual budget, agreed with the Director of Finance and Operations.
- Organise the 11+, 13+ and 16+ music scholarship schemes in collaboration with the Admissions department.
- Represent the department at meetings including full staff meetings.
- Hold regular departmental meetings to disseminate information, discuss policy, share good practice and to plan and delegate departmental work, ensuring that minutes are taken and shared.
- Organise the termly ABRSM examinations in collaboration with the Music Administrator.
- Organise opportunities for lectures and masterclasses from and with visiting professionals.
- Organise the annual St Helen and St Katharine Music Festival and the House Music competition, sourcing adjudicators for each.
- Liaise with the School Chaplain and Organist in all matters relating to Chapel music.
- Complete INSET training, both in person and online.
- Liaise with the Communications department to ensure extensive coverage and celebration of the work of the department.
- Track and celebrate the performance of St Helen's students in their musical lives beyond the School.
- Work with Directors of Music in other local schools to develop joint musical opportunities.
- Support students who are seeking choral scholarships within Higher Education.
- Teach an agreed number of periods across any Key Stage and complete marking, assessment and reporting in accordance with this.



The person

Skills/abilities

- An outstanding musician with a degree related to Music and/or wide experience working in a musically ambitious environment.
- A wide-ranging knowledge of musical repertoire and history and a passion for inspiring others to involve themselves in the field.
- The ability to play the piano at a very high level is essential and the organ is desirable.

Experience, knowledge and qualifications

- Experience of excellent curriculum teaching and quality assurance systems.
- Excellent written and oral communication and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent organisational skills which include high profile event coordination.
- An ability to work under pressure and to tight time scales and the ability to prioritise own workload.
- An empathetic approach to working with young musicians who have many competing demands on their time and a solutions focussed approach to this – with the student at the centre of this.
- An ability to get the best out of both strong student musicians and novice student musicians.

Personal attributes

- A readiness to develop opportunities beyond the confines of the school day and term, such as choir tours.
- Management skills which get the best out of staff team members.
- Sense of humour and patience.
- Ability to deliver high standards and to maintain accuracy and an attention to detail.
- Readiness to continue to grow as a teacher and as a musician

Salary and benefits

- This is a permanent full-time position for Director of Music to start in September 2025.
- Teachers are paid a salary that reflects their knowledge and experience. St Helen's offers competitive salary levels and has its own salary scale which offers scope for pay progression.
- In addition, this post carries a Head of Department management allowance of £12,038 per annum.
- Employees may join a staff Pension Scheme.
- Teachers are entitled to take the normal School holidays.
- The School currently operates a cycle to work scheme.
- Employees are entitled to free lunches when the kitchens are operating.
- There is free car parking on site.
- Employees may use the fully equipped gymnasium/sports facility on site.

St Helen and St Katharine is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers, the Disclosure and Barring Service and overseas Police checks, if applicable. Employment is subject to these checks



The process

These job details should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding policies, available within the Working at St Helen's section of our website.

Please then complete an application form (available within the Working at St Helen's section of our website). The completed and signed application form, along with a brief supporting letter addressed to **Mrs Rebecca Dougall, Headmistress**, should be submitted via email (recruitment@shsk.org.uk) in the first instance and then sent to:

Human Resources Department
St Helen and St Katharine
Faringdon Road
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 1BE

Please note that any application form submitted electronically must be completed in the existing application form format, within Adobe.

The closing date for this post is **Thursday 23 January 2025 at 09.00am**.

First stage interviews will take place on **Thursday 30 January 2025**.

Second stage interviews for candidates successful at first stage interviews will take place on take place on either **Wednesday 5 February or Thursday 6 February 2025**.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback except to those candidates who attend an interview.

We look forward to receiving your completed application.



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ST HELEN &
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Independent day school for girls aged 9–18
Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1BE