



Assistant 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

Ranked the top girls' school in Oxfordshire in the Times Parent Power 2024 and the top 4 girls' school for sport in the UK by School Sport Magazine, St Helen and St Katharine is one of the leading independent schools in the country. It 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 the Music Department is handed on from a brilliant, long-serving Director of Music to her outstanding successor, we also now have an exciting opportunity to appoint an Assistant Director of Music from September 2025 on either a full-time basis or alternatively as a job share with a minimum split of 3 days per week.

The role would suit a well-qualified graduate musician who is a superb teacher and who wishes to develop their management and leadership skills in the context of a high achieving, ambitious and very busy independent school Music Department.

The successful candidate will be fully committed to the existing extra-curricular musical life of the School and will want to work with the Director of Music to develop this further. They will have the ability to direct choral and/or instrumental ensembles and excellent keyboard skills are a prerequisite. Experience of the musical directorship of musical theatre productions is desirable.

The postholder may teach across the age range from Year 5 through to A level and will be involved in the work to support both scholars and those seeking musical scholarships and academic places at competitive universities.

St Helen and St Katharine is a very positive environment in which to work. We have the privilege of teaching delightful, highly motivated and able pupils and of working with a very supportive team of staff. This is an excellent opportunity to make a real difference to the musical education of our students and to join a lively and successful department of hard-working teachers.

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 and the Assistant Director of Music are supported by 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 benefits from having an administrator.

The Director and the Assistant Director, along with the school organist, are also responsible for the music which supports the life of chapel within the School, and also routine assemblies and at the special services which occur throughout the year.

Classroom teaching is primarily shared between the Director and the Assistant Director of Music, 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 facilities. The department has a suite of rooms available for its academic and instrumental teaching. In addition, the music technology room has 14 desktops each running Sibelius 7.

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.

Subject details/curriculum

Music is a valued part of the academic curriculum. It is a compulsory element 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), guitars and ukuleles and there are range of electronic keyboards available to support classroom music.

Students are entered for Edexcel GCSE and AQA A level examinations and the school hosts termly practical and theory examinations of the ABRSM. The departmental results are excellent with A level securing 100% A*/A 2022-24 and GCSE 72% 9/8 across 2022-24.

The department actively supports students' annual participation and success in the Abingdon and Oxford Music Festivals, and the Pro Corda National Chamber Music Competition.

Development of the supra-curricular provision is a departmental aim for the coming years alongside wider external performance and the re-introduction of concert and choir tours abroad.





The person

Skills/abilities

- Excellent teaching skills. Ability to teach up to and including A level.
- Ability to direct choral and/or instrumental ensembles.
- Excellent keyboard skills and a confident accompanist.
- Ability to inspire students across the age range.
- Ability to build students' confidence and appreciation of music.
- Ability to relate well to young people.
- Ability to work well on a day to day basis in a supportive and collaborative manner as part of a departmental team.
- Ability to initiate and contribute to the development and implementation of departmental policies and goals.
- Effective communication skills, both oral and written.
- Effective IT skills.

Experience, knowledge and qualifications

- Proven teaching experience at secondary level.
- Experience of musical direction for large scale musical theatre productions
- Excellent subject and curriculum knowledge.
- A full awareness of the current issues relating to the development of teaching music in schools.
- A good first or higher degree in a music discipline.
- Qualified Teacher Status.

Personal attributes

- Enthusiasm, passion and energy for the subject.
- An imaginative musician.
- A full commitment to involvement in an extra-curricular programme which meets the needs of all students.
- Hard working with a willingness to take an appropriate share of departmental responsibilities as second in department and participate in trips, including foreign trips during school holidays.
- A professional and reflective practitioner; ability to self-appraise and manage continuous professional self-development.
- A commitment to safeguarding our students in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Salary and benefits

- 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 management allowance of £2,644 per annum.
- This is a permanent, full-time position or alternatively as a job share with a minimum split of 3 days per week start in September 2025.
- 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 vacancies 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 24 April 2025 at 4.00pm**
Interviews will take place on **Friday 2 May 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