



Music Scholarship 16+

Duration: 2 years

What are we looking for in a scholar?

Our Music Awards are more than recognition - they are a gateway to exceptional opportunities. We expect our Music scholars to embrace these fully, growing not only as musicians, but also as leaders within our community.

At St Helen and St Katharine, we are proud that our Music scholars go on to shape and lead the musical life of the School, creating a culture of ambition, creativity and excellence.

A successful scholarship candidate will demonstrate the following key attributes:

- Natural musical instinct and a clear enthusiasm for performance and musical development
- Music scholars at St Helen's are typically multi-instrumentalists, and candidates are expected to study two instruments and/or voice

While the following guidelines indicate the typical standard expected at each entry point, we recognise that every musician develops differently. Potential, commitment and musicality are considered alongside formal qualifications.

Where a candidate offers only one instrument but performs at a level significantly higher than normally expected, they are encouraged to contact the Director of Music to arrange an informal discussion.

- Principal instrument: equivalent to ABRSM Grade 8 or above (merit or distinction, preferably Distinction)
- Second study: equivalent to ABRSM Grade 6 or above
- Theory: ABRSM Grade 5 Theory achieved or equivalent

While grades provide a useful benchmark, they are only one part of the picture.

We look carefully at:

- Quality of performance and musical expression
- Technical security and sound production
- Aural awareness and listening skills

- Sight-reading ability
- Overall musical potential

Where graded examinations have been taken, high marks are often more significant than the grade itself.

Our aim is not simply to reward achievement, but to identify and nurture musicians with imagination, commitment and the potential to flourish in a dynamic and supportive musical environment.

We recognise that each musician has a unique profile, and we warmly encourage families to discuss individual circumstances with the Director of Music.

What does a scholar enjoy?

Our Music scholars are at the very heart of our vibrant musical community. We invest deeply in their development, offering an exceptional and enriching programme that combines expert teaching, outstanding performance opportunities and personalised support.

A Music scholar at St Helen's will benefit from:

- Up to 30 complimentary instrumental or vocal lessons each year, delivered by expert specialist teachers
- Exceptional tuition and coaching, ensuring progress in both technical ability and musical artistry
- Regular repertoire coaching and accompanying sessions with our Head of Keyboard
- Guaranteed access to high-level ensembles (no additional auditions necessary), matched to each student's instrument and ability
- Specialist aural training to develop advanced listening and musicianship skills
- Participation in our chamber music programme, fostering ensemble sensitivity and collaboration
- A bespoke mentoring and enrichment programme, uniquely tailored to each scholar to support their musical journey
- Exclusive performance platforms, including our Music Scholars' Recital Series and Tea Concert Series
- Priority access to concerts, workshops, masterclasses and cultural visits, designed specifically for our Music scholars
- Individualised preparation and support for competitions and national-level auditions (including orchestras and choirs)
- Leadership opportunities, including coaching and inspiring younger musicians

Music scholars are given priority for many musical opportunities across the school, helping them to develop confidence, leadership skills and a strong sense of belonging within a high-achieving musical environment.

Expectations of a scholar

We seek committed, enthusiastic and highly motivated young musicians who are ready to contribute fully to the musical life of the School.

- Play an active and enthusiastic role in the rich musical life of the Department
- Demonstrate a commitment to excellence in all musical studies
- Maintain disciplined and consistent practice routines
- Participate fully in ensembles, including at least two core groups such as a choir, orchestra and/or chamber ensemble
- Perform regularly, including in at least one Music Scholars' Recital each year
- Study Music at GCSE
- Engage fully with their Music Mentor, attending regular meetings
- Act as musical ambassadors, inspiring others through leadership, example and enthusiasm

Selection and assessment procedure

Stage 1: Audio-Visual Submission

Applicants are invited to submit a short video recording showcasing their musical ability.

- Performances should include each instrument and/or voice studied
- The total duration should be no more than 8 minutes
- Recordings can be made using a phone or similar device and recommend using WeTransfer to submit videos
- Accompaniment or backing tracks are welcomed but not required
- The recording should clearly and accurately represent the candidate's playing

Submissions should be sent one week in advance of the assessment day.

References

Two musical references are required:

- The candidate's current Head of Music
- Their principal instrument/singing teacher

References should comment on:

- Performance (accuracy, interpretation, musicality)
- Sight-reading
- Aural skills
- Commitment and passion for music

Stage 2: Scholarship Audition

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a live audition with the Director of Music and a senior member of the Music Department.

Awards are made on the basis of this audition, which is designed not only to assess achievement but also to identify potential, creativity and enthusiasm.

The audition consists of four parts:

1. Performance

- Two contrasting pieces on the principal instrument
- One piece on the second study

2. Sight-Reading

- A short test appropriate to the candidate's current level

3. Quick Study

- A piece will be sent by email 24 hours in advance to be performed at the audition

4. Aural Tests

- Including pitch work, memory, and musical understanding

5. Viva Voce

- An informal musical discussion exploring the candidate's interests, experiences and ambitions

All accompanied pieces should be performed with our Head of Keyboard, and candidates will be allocated rehearsal time before their audition.

Overseas applicants may request a virtual audition.

Details of the Scholarship Programme together with schedules and application forms are available in the Scholarships area of the school website www.shsk.org.uk.