



OLA
OUR LADY'S
ABINGDON

The Music Department



Introduction

Welcome to the Music Department at OLA! Music is housed on the first floor of the main building, just above the Reception and Main Office area. It includes a large classroom, a drum/rock room, the Music Office, two small practice rooms, a Music Technology suite and an instrument store. Plans are currently being discussed to provide the Department with a new, state-of-the-art recording studio and control room.

Department Aims and Ethos

“Music is a universal human activity, in which all young people are capable of developing knowledge, skills, and understanding. Music is an essential part of the broad and balanced curriculum offered at OLA. Studying music at school should enable pupils to lay a foundation for lifelong participation in and appreciation of music, through practical and critical engagement with a broad range of musical styles, genres and traditions.”

The Department's aims are:

1. To deliver a practical and varied **musical curriculum in the classroom** designed to engage and encourage all OLA/perspective students to explore performing and academic aspects of music.
2. To offer a wide range of **co-curricular instrumental and vocal studies**, creating performing and learning opportunities within the school and outside, in which most pupils will participate at some point in their school career, and many will participate regularly.
3. To continue to re-establish, after the damage caused by COVID-19, a **programme of OLA choral, orchestral and chamber music** – therefore providing opportunities for our musicians to take part in a variety of vocal/instrumental ensembles from classical to pop and ethnic. Music making should continue to be ‘live’ and in front of an audience/congregation whenever possible.
4. To enable those pupils who show aptitude and enthusiasm for music to achieve the **highest standards possible**, and to lay good foundations for musical study at higher level.
5. To build on an excellent **public profile for music in the school**, by celebrating pupils' musical achievements both within the school and the wider community.

Our Visiting Music Teachers (VMTs) are a crucial part of the success in achieving these aims and provide the support needed in every aspect of the Department's work.

In conjunction with the Director of Music, they will dedicate time to stretch the pupils who show talent and aptitude, but also help to motivate those who find music harder or less natural.

Academic Music

- ✓ At Year 3-9, Classroom Music is based around the principles and guidelines of the National Curriculum (KS2 and KS3) and is designed to lay the musical foundations for every pupil. The core components of **Listening, Performing and Composing** are introduced at an early stage. Alongside this, we actively encourage many young pupils to start practical vocal or instrumental 1:1 tuition with a VMT, in addition to classroom music. At Year 9 pupils can opt to study music. Many of the concepts for GCSE and beyond are introduced at this point.
- ✓ At Year 10-13, **GCSE and A-Level Music** courses are taught, building on the foundations laid in the earlier years, and complemented by VMT instrumental/vocal tuition as well as co-curricular music activities/groups outside the classroom. The courses are designed to prepare students for Higher Education and further specialist studies at Universities and Music Colleges.

Our VMTs are willing to share their expertise in the context of a classroom, for instance by **presenting a musical instrument**.

They also often **assist with co-curricular music groups**. Pupils always appreciate VMTs' presence and support in those activities, as well as the invaluable experience and unique set of skills they can provide.

Ensembles

CHAPEL CHOIR – Open to all singers with an ability to read music. Perform Church music in English and Latin.

STUDENT CHOIR – student-led. Open to all. Perform a variety of contemporary Pop songs and light favourites.

WIND BAND – Open to all woodwind, brass and percussion players. Recommended Gd. 3 standard. Perform Film music and light classics.

STRING ENSEMBLE – Open to all string players (violin/viola/cello/double bass). Perform a variety of classical and light music for strings at all levels.

CHAMBER GROUPS – These are formed on an ad-hoc basis.

TVYO – the Thames Vale Youth Orchestra: more advanced musicians are encouraged to audition for this County orchestra, rehearsing and playing concerts on a wider scale.

Concerts and Liturgies

The Chapel Choir performs Mass settings and Hymns in Latin and English at the **whole-school Masses** on Feast days and Holy Days of obligation.

An annual **Service of Lessons and Carols** is held in one of the Abingdon churches at the end of the Autumn Term.

The **Music Scholars Concert** takes place during the Spring Term, in a prestigious venue – often in Oxford.

The **Summer Festival Concert** concludes the Summer Term as a showcase of all the musical talents in the school.

A regular series of **Tea Concerts** offers all pupils the opportunity to perform any repertoire, at any stage in the learning, in front of a supportive audience of parents and friends.

A culture of 'live' performing

At OLA we foster a culture of keeping music "live" and public. For this reason, VMTs will always prepare their students for **live performance in the presence of an audience** and, at GCSE/A-level, will also train them for the challenges of recording and exam presentation.

1:1 Instrumental and Vocal Lessons

Lessons are currently offered on the following:

Vocal Studies

Ms	Kari Moffatt	Singing
Ms	Rebecca Ramsurn	Singing

Keyboard

Mrs	Sheila Henderson	Piano
Mrs	Adele Smythe	Piano
Ms	Josie Towle-Jones	Organ

Woodwind

Mrs	Rachel Wright	Flute
Ms	Catherine Underhill	Oboe
Mrs	Roshan Hughes	Clarinet
Mr	Glyn Williams	Bassoon/Saxophone

Brass

Mrs	Sara Wallbridge	Brass
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Percussion

Mr	Tim Palmer	Percussion
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Strings

Ms	Kirsten Williams	Violin (Viola)
Mrs	Liz Parkin	Cello
Mr	Chris Ayres	Guitar (Classical)

The School Day

Senior School

8.30-8.55 Registration/assembly

9.00-10.00 Lesson 1

10.00-10.20 Break

10.20-11.20 Lesson 2

11.25-12.25 Lesson 3

12.25-13.55 Lunch

13.55-14.55 Lesson 4

15.00-16.00 Lesson 5

16.00 End of school day

Music Scholars

OLA offers a **Music Scholarship**, a selective programme for young musicians who show a high level of enthusiasm and achievement in **music performance** and are seeking to develop further. A Music Scholarship holder will represent the high standards and ambitions the OLA Music Department strives towards.

In its present form, the Scholarship **funds tuition on either one or two instruments** with one of the school's Visiting Music Teachers. This currently amounts to 30 lessons in the year.

In exchange for the teaching they receive, and for their status within the Music Department, all Music Scholars are expected to:

- ✚ Demonstrate an **excellent work ethos** in their instrument(s) or voice; this should be apparent in both lessons and personal practice on a regular basis. Pupils will be expected to make progress in all areas of music performance including:
 - Repertoire



- Technique
 - Sight-reading
 - Aural skills
 - Ensemble performing
 - Communication and presentation skills
- ✚ Be willing to **contribute to concerts**, services, and events as appropriate to their standard and ability, thus representing OLA at its best. A 'flagship' **Music Scholars' Concert** takes place in a prestigious venue every year and constitutes the highlight of the Music Department events.
 - ✚ Show **leadership skills**, as required, for example in instrumental ensembles and choirs.
 - ✚ Show an interest in **helping** both staff and peers with day-to-day running of clubs and enrichment activities.
 - ✚ Keep up with their **own process of development** and not 'stagnate'. Many Scholars are entered for regular ABRSM examinations and diplomas and set high targets for their progression.

A Scholarship **review process** - involving the VMT, the Director of Music in discussion with the Scholar, the Scholarship Board and the parents - takes place from time to time to ensure the Music Scholarship continues to be fully deserved by each candidate.

Selection process

The Director of Music is always happy to meet and hear potential Music Scholars informally prior to any formal audition. Interest in the Scholarship is usually recorded **towards entry at Year 7 or 10**.

The formal audition, which is organised centrally by the OLA Office and at a mutually convenient time, will normally require all candidates to attend a **viva voce interview** and:

- Perform (live) **two contrasting pieces of repertoire** and show an understanding of their musical content and technical challenges
- Present their own choice of **technical requirements** as relevant to their ABRSM, or equivalent, grade: scales / arpeggios / exercises / studies to represent their standard
- Be ready to **sight-read** a suitable short piece and describe its features
- Be tested in **aural skills**

NB. A Scholarship review process - involving the VMT, the Director of Music in discussion with the Scholar and parents - may take place from time to time to ensure the Music Scholarship continues to be fully deserved by each candidate. Regular failure to meet the expectations above would result in the Scholarship being withdrawn. Similarly, a non-Scholar pupil who regularly displays Music Scholar-like qualities may be put forward for an honorary award or a full Music Scholarship.