



Assistant Director of Music



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

Welcome to St Helen and St Katharine

St Helen and St Katharine is one of the UK's leading independent girls' schools – a place where students thrive, and our brilliant staff use their expertise and enthusiasm to go above and beyond.

Our students achieve significant academic success each year, much of which is due to our teachers' ambition and passion, but the students and their parents are very aware that it is the whole staff group that makes St Helen's 'tick', and all staff are valued for their contribution to the school community.

When people start working at St Helen's, they are joining a vibrant community of 700 students and 225 members of staff. Whether as one of those expert teachers or as one of our skilled support staff, there are many opportunities to become fully immersed in life at St Helen's – from coming along to watch one of the outstanding school productions to taking part in the range of activities we have to support staff well-being and our sense of community.

We are fortunate to be able to offer a range of training and professional development opportunities to support staff growth; our staff training budget is generous and allows for both departmental initiatives and individual development. We look to get outstanding speakers to address both the whole staff and specific groups; we have been delighted to welcome Tom Sherrington, David Didau and David Weston to talk to our teaching staff in recent years and all staff have benefitted from the work we have done with Executive Coach, Simon Scott, as we look to keep life and work and wellness in balance. There is an active Joint Staff Consultative Committee and a regular staff e-zine that shares ideas for things to do in the local area.

St Helen's is an outstanding place to start your teaching career, and we provide comprehensive support for teacher induction. We encourage talented graduates interested in teaching to join us directly and have plenty of experience of guiding them to gain their qualified teacher status through the school-based PGCE from the University of Buckingham.

We are also an excellent school for newly qualified teachers to complete their 2-year Early Careers induction, guided by experienced subject mentors and our Initial Teacher Training Coordinator.

We look to connect both trainee and early career teachers with their peers in our immediate network of both independent and maintained sector schools in Abingdon.





The School

Recently named Independent Girls' School of the Year, ranked the top 5 girls' school in the Southeast (*The Times Parent Power 2026*) and among the top 20 schools for sport in the UK (*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, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

Unapologetically focused on girls – their needs, their ambitions and their voices – St Helen's is where futures are shaped *on her terms*. 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, from our Junior Department (Year 5–6) through to Sixth Form. 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 co-curricular 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 co-curricular 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's. 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's. 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's, and teaching and support staff work closely together, appreciative of the positive difference everyone can make in their varied roles.





The role

We have an exciting opportunity to appoint a full-time Assistant Director of Music from September 2026 or January 2027 to assist the Director of Music in the day to day running of the Department.

This role is ideally suited to a well-qualified graduate musician who is an outstanding teacher and is keen to develop their management and leadership skills within a highly successful, ambitious, and vibrant independent school Music Department.

The successful candidate will play a key role in sustaining and further developing the School's rich extra-curricular musical programme. Working closely with the Director of Music, they will contribute to a wide range of musical activities and performances. Excellent keyboard skills and the ability to direct choral and/or instrumental ensembles is essential.

The postholder will be able to teach across the full age range, from Year 5 to A level, and will be actively involved in supporting both music scholars and students preparing for scholarships and academic applications to leading universities.

St Helen and St Katharine offers a particularly positive and rewarding working environment. Our students are delightful, highly motivated, and academically able, and staff benefit from a collaborative and supportive professional community. This position offers an excellent opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to students' musical education within a lively and successful department of hard-working and committed 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 Assistant Director of Music are supported by a team of seven part-time Heads of Section (Wind and Brass, Strings, Keyboard, Singing, Choirs, Bands and Pop), along with approximately 30 visiting instrumental teachers. Some 400 individual lessons take place each week, across all major instrumental disciplines, including harp, organ, percussion and singing. The Department is supported by a dedicated music administrator.

Classroom teaching is shared within the Department, alongside the direction of co-curricular ensembles and large-scale musical productions. The role includes accompanying for rehearsals, performances and examinations. Opportunities for teaching and ensemble direction will develop in line with the strengths and interests of the successful candidate, who will be encouraged to extend their areas of expertise.

A rich and extensive co-curricular programme forms a central part of musical life at the School, with over 30 ensembles. Large instrumental groups include First Orchestra, Camerata, Sinfonia, Sinfonietta, Concert Band, Big Band, Wind Orchestra, Brass Band, Rock Band, Ukulele Band and Steel Pan Band. Chamber music is also a particular strength, with more than 15 ensembles, including Cello and Bass Squad, Violas!, and a range of trios, quartets and wind ensembles. They regularly participate in the Oxford Music Festival and Pro Corda Chamber Music Competition where they achieve consistently strong results. Many students perform with county and national youth orchestras and choirs as well as attend the junior departments of London music colleges.

The School has a strong and well-established choral tradition, with six choirs and a variety of smaller vocal ensembles performing a wide-ranging repertoire, from liturgical and secular works to jazz and contemporary styles. The Chapel Choir plays a central role in the musical life of the School and has recently reached the Finals of the Barnardo's National Choir of the Year competition at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and will sing Evensong at Winchester Cathedral next year.

The Music Department fosters a highly collaborative, supportive and purposeful environment, with all staff contributing actively to its creative life. Music is at the heart of the School and plays an important role in chapel services, regular assemblies and special events throughout the year.

The successful candidate will join a vibrant and stimulating musical environment that demands high levels of musicianship, energy, leadership and imagination.

Facilities

The Department benefits from excellent facilities, including a suite of teaching and rehearsal spaces. These include specialist rooms for piano, cello/harp and percussion teaching, alongside larger teaching rooms, a Music Technology suite, and a Performing Arts Studio. The main school hall, purpose-built for concerts and theatrical performances, houses a full-sized Yamaha CF3 concert grand piano and an electric organ. The Chapel contains a small three-manual Harrison & Harrison organ.

Subject details/curriculum

Music is a valued part of the academic curriculum and is compulsory up to Year 8, after which it becomes an optional subject. The Department provides a KS3 course which offers an introduction to the key components of musical style and allows students the opportunity to explore these in a range of classical, popular and world music contexts. Students develop listening, performing and composing skills, exploring the great works of the past and understanding how to create those of the future.

Music is a popular subject at GCSE, with consistently excellent results. Students follow the Edexcel specification, studying four areas: Instrumental Music 1700–1820, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, and Fusions. Outstanding results are also achieved at A level, where students follow the AQA specification. Many go on to study Music at university and continue their musical involvement in higher education and beyond.





The School also hosts termly ABRSM practical examinations.

Role details

St Helen and St Katharine values the highest level of professionalism in its teachers. It is expected that all teachers will display a high level of knowledge and understanding of their subject area and communicate this enthusiastically to students. Teachers should have high expectations of their students and be able to display evidence of planning, preparation and monitoring of progress.

It is the responsibility of all teachers to create a stimulating and positive learning environment, and to employ a range of teaching strategies, thus enabling all students to fulfil their academic potential. They should inspire trust and confidence.

Specific responsibilities include:

Curriculum delivery

- Planning, preparing and teaching the classes assigned to him/her, using a range of strategies for teaching and classroom management to ensure that individual learning needs are met.
- Ensuring that marking of students' work is both regular and thorough and that full records are kept.
- To regularly monitor the progress of all students in their teaching groups, taking account of individual learning needs to have a positive impact on student progress.
- Liaising with the Head of Learning Support on strategies to support the progress of students on the Learning Support register.
- Keeping abreast of current thinking and development in the subject area(s).
- Assisting the Head of Department with the development of appropriate syllabuses, schemes of work and teaching styles.
- Sharing resources and training materials with colleagues.
- Contributing to departmental activities, e.g. enrichment work, clubs, societies and trips.
- Taking responsibility for professional development and using the outcomes to improve teaching and learning.
- Attending whole school INSET sessions.

Physical resources and safety

- Meeting the health and safety requirements of the School.
- Working with the other members of the department to ensure that all resources are well looked after and that departmental areas provide a stimulating environment for teaching.

Communication

- Providing or contributing to oral and written assessments, reports and references relating to individual students.
- Attending Parents' Meetings.
- Attending regular departmental meetings and full staff meetings.
- Attending Open Day.

Pastoral and whole school support

- Being a form tutor if required.
- Contributing to the pastoral care and personal development of students.
- Carrying out a share of supervisory duties in accordance with published schedules.
- Ensuring that a register of attendance in lessons is kept and taking appropriate action in cases of student absence.
- Supporting the ethos of the School through maintaining the highest standards of professionalism.
- Attending assembly or chapel and whole school services.
- Contributing to whole school activities, e.g. clubs and expeditions.

The person

Skills/abilities

- Excellent teaching skills and has a creative and innovative approach to music education.
- Ability to teach from Year 5 through to GCSE and 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 assist the Director of Music on a day-to-day basis and work in a supportive and collaborative manner as part of the wider departmental team.
- Ability to support the Director of Music in shaping an exciting future for academic and music performance.
- Ability to develop musical opportunities and to ensure a high profile of music is maintained across the school through innovation and interest.
- 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 and a confident user of music notational software.
- Ambitious for school music and musicians.

Experience, knowledge and qualifications

- A good first or higher degree in a music discipline.
- Qualified Teacher Status
- Proven teaching experience at secondary level.
- Experience of musical direction for large scale musical theatre productions
- Excellent subject and curriculum knowledge.
- Be up-to-date with current thinking and professional developments in the subject.

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 evening concerts, 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 full-time management allowance of £2,696 per annum.
- This is a permanent, full-time position to start in either September 2026 or January 2027.
- St Helen's will be introducing fee remission of up to 50% on tuition fees for children of staff members at the School from September 2026 (pro-rated for part-time staff).
- Teachers may join a staff Pension Scheme with an employer contribution of 23.6% and default employee contribution of 7% of gross pensionable pay. Salary sacrifice is also available for pension contributions. Members of the Scheme will also receive Income Protection cover should they be unable to work due to long-term sickness or injury.
- All staff are covered by a life assurance scheme, paying out three times annual salary in the event of their death whilst employed by the School.
- A range of other staff benefits are available via external providers such as an Employee Assistance Programme, access to GP and dental advice lines amongst other services.
- 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, plus refreshments in the staff room during the day and after school.
- There is free car parking on site.
- Employees may use the fully equipped Sports Centre facilities including a fitness suite, ergo suite and group cycle studio.
- Free eye tests and annual flu vaccination.
- Access to a well-stocked school library.

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 Sarah Rollings, Head**, 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 **Monday 22 June 2026 at 12.00pm**. Early application is encouraged as we will review applications throughout the advertising period and reserve the right to close this vacancy early.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback.

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