



Music Department

Director of Music: Mrs Sian Ford

RGS Prep have long-standing musical traditions that lie at the heart of the daily life of the school. As well as being the choir school to Guildford Cathedral, the music department delivers a wide range of music education and co-curricular opportunities with access for all.

Curriculum Music in Pre-Prep

Boys receive weekly specialist music lessons from Nursery to Year 2, developing listening, performance, and musicianship skills. A weekly singing practice is held on Thursdays covering hymns and topical songs throughout the year.

All Pre-Prep boys are given performance opportunities throughout the year, including Assemblies, Workshops, a Christmas Nativity production, Informal Concerts, and a Summer End of Year Production.

Private, specialist instrumental lessons are available to boys in Years 1 and 2. In Year 1 they can begin violin lessons and in Year 2 they can learn violin or piano. Two Informal Concerts are held per year and, when ready, boys are prepared for ABRSM Grade examinations.

Pre-Prep Choir is open to all boys in Years 1 and 2, it is run by Mrs Ford and the Sub-Organist of Guildford Cathedral on Tuesdays after school.

Curriculum Music in Prep

In Year 3 and 4, boys receive two class music lessons a week including ukulele, singing and musicianship studies with Mrs Ford, and a Year 3 instrumental scheme and classroom orchestra projects run by our Instrumental Music Co-ordinator, Mrs Chalmers.

The 'Instrumental Scheme' enables our Year 3 boys to try out a range of instruments through a carousel system and then spend two terms developing their ensemble, performance, and musicianship skills on either the violin, cello or recorder led by specialist teachers.

In Year 5 and 6, boys receive 1 class music lesson a week and develop digital and acoustic composition techniques alongside theory, practical and performance skills. All of Year 4 and 6 participate in choral or rock cantata performances in the Lent term.

Private Instrumental Lessons

We are extremely proud of our wide-ranging provision of private instrumental study, which is provided by our fabulous team of 16 experienced Visiting Music Teachers.

Instrumental lessons are offered on a rotational basis, including breaks and lunchtime, across all subjects (apart from swimming and games, when the boys may be off site). There are a limited number of 'fixed' lessons available, and these are offered to boys receiving Learning Support and, where possible, those studying multiple instruments. Please note that, whilst they settle in, only one instrument can be studied within school hours in Year 3.

The following instrument lessons are offered:

- Piano
- Singing
- Strings: violin, viola, and cello/bass
- Brass: trumpet, trombone, horn, euphonium, and tuba
- Woodwind: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and saxophone
- Guitar
- Drums

Private lessons are 30 minutes long and the boys will have 30 lessons spread out over the year, averaging 10 lessons per term. A charge of £250 per term is made for lessons, which is added to the termly bill in arrears.



Music Examinations

We hold ABRSM examinations in school in December and May. Our drum pupils follow the Rockschooll syllabus and are put forward for exams when they are ready.

Preparation for Music Scholarships to Future Schools

Our most able musicians are prepared for music scholarship applications via our Maestro scheme. Mrs Ford liaises with parents and prepares the supporting documentation to accompany the music scholarship applications made by parents.

Ensembles, Bands and Choirs

As part of the co-curricular provision at RGS Prep, we run a wide variety of music groups. Sign-up is part of the 'Clubs' booking system which happens before the start of each term; a small charge is made for any ensembles run by our Visiting Music Teachers. The following groups are currently available:

- **Guitar Ensemble** - Year 5 and Year 6 boys (by invitation)
- **Senior Choir** - open to all in Year 5 and Year 6 boys who would like to sing in concerts both in school and out, throughout the year
- **Junior Choir** - open to all Year 3 and 4 boys who would like to sing in concerts throughout the year
- **Pre-Prep Choir** - open to all boys in Year 1 and 2
- **Senior Orchestra** - Year 5 and 6 boys (by invitation)
- **Maestros** - the Maestro scheme is a by invitation extension group for our most able musicians in Year 6 who are considering music scholarships
- **Wind Ensemble** - for all Year 5 and 6 woodwind players
- **Brass Ensemble** - for all Year 5 and 6 brass players
- **Junior String Ensemble** - open to all Year 4 (bowed) string players
- **Senior String Ensemble** - open to all Year 5 and 6 (bowed) string players
- **Intermediate Wind Ensemble** - for Grade 1 + woodwind players
- **Chorister Theory** - compulsory for Year 4, 5 and 6 Guildford Cathedral Choristers
- **Rock Bands** - there are 2 Rock Bands, one for Year 5 the other for Year 6 boys
- **Beginner Music Theory** - boys wishing to begin studying music theory, will be taken through the Grade 1 syllabus and then on to Grade 2
- **Pre-Prep Strings** - runs in the latter half of the year when boys are ready

Performance Opportunities

There are performance opportunities for all boys throughout the year. From time to time we are invited to take part in additional projects with RGS senior school and external organisations such as Guildford Choral Society and Southern Pro Musica orchestra.

In the Michaelmas Term we hold three Informal Concerts giving boys the opportunity to play their instruments to an audience of parents and staff. In the run up to Christmas, we look forward to the Christmas Tree Concert (where our Ensembles and Bands perform seasonal music), our Pre-Prep Nativity, and our whole-school Cathedral Carol Service.

The Lent Term is all about the House Music Competition. A series of concerts for each category of music are held after school, adjudicated by specialist visiting musicians, and the best performances from each House are selected to go through to the finals.

During the Trinity Term we hold a Spring Concert or Gala for our Ensembles and Choirs. The Year 6 production is always a highlight of the year and there are opportunities for boys to play and sing at their Prize Giving at the end of term and key events such as Remembrance.

Cathedral Choristers

RGS Prep is proud to be the choir school for Guildford Cathedral's boy choristers. Cathedral staff hold choir practice at RGS Prep four mornings a week before school. Choristers sing Choral Evensong at Guildford Cathedral on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They sing services on Sundays and take part in parish visits, concerts, recordings, and international tours. The choristers lead extremely busy but rewarding lives.

Vacancies exist each year for musical boys who are interested in becoming choristers; the Chapter of the Cathedral awards educational bursaries to boys selected for the choir. It is sometimes possible to secure additional funding for boys whose family circumstances prevent their parents from contributing to the cost of school fees. Full details can be found in the prospective boy chorister booklet, a copy of which can be sent to you by emailing liturgymusic@guildford-cathedral.org.

Most boys are auditioned when they are in the Michaelmas term of Year 2, with a view to starting as a probationer chorister when they enter Year 3 the following September. If offered a place in the choir, they are expected to stay until their voice changes or until they reach the end of Year 8. Auditions are offered to boys already in RGS Prep or boys who have accepted an offer to start in Year 3.

RGS Prep Music Department Contact Details

Mrs Ford our Director of Music can be contacted by email via the Prep School Office email rgsp-office@rgsg.co.uk. The Music Secretary is Mrs Peters, who again can be contacted via this email address or 01483 880650.

