



Music at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

About BVGS

Bishop Vesey's Grammar School is a five form entry selective state grammar school, founded in 1527. We converted to academy status in 2012. We are located in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, serving 1136 day students (September 2017) including 736 boys from Years 7-11 and a co-educational Sixth Form of 400 students. Our mission is to offer inspiration and excellence, inside and outside the classroom, to all the young people in our care.

Our core values include a commitment to:

- 1) Inspirational teaching and outstanding learning
- 2) Academic excellence and a spirit of enquiry and curiosity
- 3) Enrichment opportunities which build leadership, independence and resilience
- 4) A warm outward-looking community, celebrating diversity and supporting others.

The Music Department

The music department is housed in purpose-built accommodation, the Clive Richards Centre, and there are two school halls, which are also used for rehearsals, concerts and productions.

The department is well-resourced with a range of instruments including classroom percussion, xylophones, guitars, keyboards and computers. Each of the two classrooms hosts many computers on which the Sibelius programme is available for student use. A range of recording and playback equipment is always on hand. The department has a CD collection and many reference books, more of which can be found in the school library.

There are nine practice rooms in addition to the two main classrooms where a dedicated team of 13 peripatetic teachers deliver instrumental lessons. Each practice room is equipped with a keyboard or piano, while one practice room also accommodates the orchestral percussion and another larger one is for ensemble activities.

In recognition of the high standard of our musical provision we were awarded Music Mark in 2016

Staffing

We have a Director of Music post.

The Director is supported by a number of staff across the school who have musical talents ranging from piano and guitar to vocals and drums. Additionally, one of our newly appointed staff in the English department has a music degree.

We are blessed with excellent support from the Head of the Music Service (SFE), Mr Ciaran O'Donnell and his team

The following staff from SFE work at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School:

Violin/Viola: Kristal Adamson
Cello/Bass: Ed Smith
Flute: Sara Wilson
Clarinet: Charlotte Buxton
Bassoon: Jo Mayne
Saxophone: Laura Tabrett
Trumpet: Amy Swallow
Trumpet and Lower Brass: David Taylor
Orchestral Percussion and Drum Kit: Bethan Jones
Guitar: Dean Noble
Piano: Andrew Ross
Voice: Thomas Lenthall
Class Brass: Emily Walker

Senior students also play an important role in leading the music department. We have a House officer role for Music Leader and our senior students from Year 10 upwards assist with conducting and leading rehearsals.

Curriculum

We offer all our Year 7 students a 'creative curriculum entitlement', which includes vocal and brass tuition, in a rotation with creative writing, and drama.

All students study Music one hour per week in Year 8. This scheme of work focuses on the key musical skills of composing, performing and listening, but chronologically building on music theory knowledge and music appreciation alongside this. It covers a range of musical styles whilst allowing students to develop some understanding of specific works. All work is assessed regularly.

Students can opt for Music in Year 9 and this course provides a preparation for studying GCSE. At GCSE, students follow the OCR syllabus, which includes Composing, Performing, an Integrated Assignment, and a Listening & Appreciation Test.

At 'A' level, we currently study Edexcel.

Achievement in Music

Students go on to study music at undergraduate level. Over the last few years, one of our students has won a choral scholarship to Oxford University. Other students have gone on to study at Leeds University, LIPA and Guildford School of Acting and Musical Theatre.

At 'A' level, over the last 3 years, 7 students have studied 'A' level Music attaining 2 As, 1B, 3Cs and a D.

At GCSE, over the last 3 years, 51 students have studied GCSE Music attaining 100% A*-C, 92% A*-B and 51% A*/A.

At the same time, many students have studied Associated Board examinations, including up to grade 8 and Diploma standard.

We are proud that some of our students go on to perform in ensembles and orchestras across Birmingham.

Extra Curricular Activities

There is a wide range of extra-curricular music, attempting to accommodate as many youngsters as possible. These include the Orchestra, the Big Band (Funky Bishops), Brass, Clarinet, Flute, Guitar, Percussion, Vocal and Sax Ensembles, Vesey Voices, Wind Band and Year 7 Choir.

Concerts are held throughout the year. The current programme includes: Junior Recitals (October), Christmas Concert (December), Spring Concert (March), Senior Recitals (April), KS3 Performance Evening (July).

On a half-termly basis, musicians take over the school dining hall for 'Busking Week', performing to their peers over lunchtime.

Our musicians also have an opportunity to perform at whole-school events throughout the year including assemblies, Founder's Day at Holy Trinity Church (October), Speech Day at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall (November) and Main School Presentation Evening (July).

The School has developed good links with the Lichfield Festival. In 2015, we hosted a Festival concert of the Sacconi Quartet, collaborating with our very own Funky Bishops. In 2016, students from BVGS were involved in a 'Lads and Dads' singing workshop, which performed at the Sutton Games. For the last two years our musicians have also been invited to play at the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Dinner at the ICC in March.

There is also an annual school House Music Festival competition in July for students in KS3.

There are plans for a Music tour in July 2018.