



BARNARD CASTLE
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

2023-24

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Introduction to Music at the Prep School

Welcome to Barnard Castle Prep School! Music is a hugely important part of life here at Barney, and we really hope that your son/daughter takes advantage of the many opportunities that are on offer. This letter is designed to share some key information with you in advance of September, but please do get in touch if you have any queries at all.

Learning an instrument

Here at Barney, we have 15 experienced and inspirational Visiting Music Teachers who are able to teach a range of instruments (as well as singing) and a variety of musical styles.

Instruments: School possess a small stock of instruments which can be loaned out to beginners for a year (a fee of £24 per term for small instruments/£36 per term for large instruments applies). Otherwise, staff are happy to refer you to local music shops who can further advise with regards to hire or purchase.

What age to start: Some pupils are ready to begin one-to-one lessons in Years 1/2 and most are at a suitable stage in their development in Year 3, but it very much depends on both the individual (in terms of reading ability and physical development) and the instrument chosen. For instance, with regards to some woodwind and brass instruments, the stage at which adult teeth have settled in may lead to an instrument teacher recommending a later start, and with certain other instruments the size of the child can make a tremendous difference. The student's enthusiasm for a particular instrument or voice is the biggest indicator of continued success. If you are unsure, our Visiting Music Teachers (VMTs) are very happy to offer a taster lesson, which is free of charge should the pupil continue to take lessons after this first lesson.

For more information, including the full list of instruments currently offered and full Terms and Conditions, please see our Prep School Individual Music Lessons Information Pack, which will be sent separately via email.

To sign up for lessons, please fill in the Individual Music Lessons Application Form, which can be found online here: <https://forms.office.com/e/oUtcV3jHWC>

Or by scanning this QR code with your phone's camera:



Instrumental Schemes

We also run several schemes each academic year, designed to support pupils in getting started on an instrument they have not played before. The schemes in place at the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year are as follows:

- **Young Organist Scheme** – set up in 2019, the Young Organist Scheme offers free lessons to pupils each year who wish to start learning the organ. This coming year, there are 6 places available to pupils in years 4-12.
- **Endangered Instrument Schemes** – Our 'Endangered Instrument Scheme' has been set up to encourage pupils to learn an instrument that is less commonly played, but still hugely rewarding. In fact, pupils that learn a slightly rarer instrument often end up with more potential opportunities, as they become so in demand! Pupils will receive free instrumental hire for the year. There is also the opportunity to have lessons in pairs. The instruments that feature as part of the 'Endangered Instrument Scheme' for the 2023-24 academic year are:
 - **Brass** – Trombone, French Horn
 - **Strings** – Viola, Cello, Double Bass

In addition, we are introducing class woodwind and brass lessons to all pupils in Years 3 and 4. More details will be shared about this in advance of September.

If you would like your son/daughter to be considered for one of the instrumental schemes outlined above, please fill in our online form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/ZcxazBGDkL>

Or here by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera:



Extracurricular Music

Making music as part of a group is one of the great joys of being a musician, and joining an ensemble provides so many unforgettable memories. This year, we return to the Sage Gateshead on Wednesday 13th March 2024 for our second whole school concert. This follows the success of our first concert at the Sage in March 2022.

A wide variety of musical groups rehearse each week, catering for young musicians of all levels. Participating in ensembles is an essential musical experience, and is of huge benefit to pupils that learn an instrument either in or out of school. Taking part in ensembles also leads to exciting opportunities to perform in public, and we would expect pupils receiving individual music lessons to participate in the music activities related to their particular instrument.

I very much hope your son's/daughter's music will thrive here at Barney. Again, please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries.

With all very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Richard Dawson'.

Richard Dawson
Director of Music
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