



# Barnard Castle School

ESTD 1883

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we look ahead to the 2026/27 academic year, I wanted to share with you some exciting developments and important updates regarding music at Barnard Castle School.

As you will be aware, our new Director of Music, Matt Lowe, joins Barney in September. Matt brings a wealth of experience and musical expertise, with a strong background in leading successful school music departments. I am very much looking forward to working alongside him as we continue to build on Barney's proud musical tradition. Together, we are committed to providing an exceptional musical education, ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to develop their talents and fulfil their musical potential during their time at Barney.

Music continues to play a central role in our co-curricular programme, and we are excited to further develop the ensemble opportunities available to our young musicians. One of Barney's longest-standing traditions, the Chapel Choir remains one of our flagship ensembles and will be a key area of development under Matt's leadership. His experience within the English choral tradition will be invaluable in strengthening both the musical standard and the profile of the Choir.

As part of this development, we aim to expand the Chapel Choir's performance opportunities while also raising expectations of its members. As with representing Barney in one of our leading sports teams, such as the 1st XV, membership of the Chapel Choir carries an important commitment. Choristers will be expected to show dedication through consistent attendance at all rehearsals and services, ensuring the Choir continues to flourish and uphold its proud tradition. Membership is a year-long commitment, enabling the ensemble to develop properly and maintain continuity; it should not be viewed as an activity that pupils move in and out of at will, but rather as a shared responsibility to fellow choristers and to the wider life of the School.

To prepare for what promises to be a busy and exciting year, we will be holding a Chapel Choir 'Pre-Season' on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September**. This full-day event will give choristers the chance to get to know one another, build a strong sense of ensemble identity, and begin work on some of the music we will perform throughout the year. There will also be time to relax together over pizza, helping to set a positive and enjoyable tone for the year ahead.

Alongside our ensemble programme, we continue to encourage pupils of all ages and abilities to take advantage of the outstanding one-to-one instrumental and vocal tuition available at Barney. Our team of Visiting Music Teachers offers specialist tuition across a wide range of instruments and voice, supporting pupils whether they are complete beginners, preparing for examinations, or simply wishing to develop their enjoyment and confidence in music. If your child would like to begin lessons or enquire about learning an additional instrument, please complete the form linked below, and we will be in touch with further information.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/ZuuPwLdqrz>

I very much look forward to another exciting year of music at Barney, and to seeing our pupils continue to grow, perform, and thrive.

Kind Regards,

**George Ford**  
Assistant Director of Music and Head of Academic Music