

FALKNER HOUSE MUSIC NOTES



Music is a key part of life at Falkner House. Class music allows for all children to have one (Years 4 – 6) or two (Nursery – Year 3) lessons per week. The class music curriculum covers singing, percussion, composition, aural training and preparation for shows and the carol concert. The individual music programme allows children from Year 1 onwards, to learn an instrument at school. Falkner House has a team of visiting specialist peripatetic musicians who give pupils individual music lessons during the school day on a rotational basis. The older children have priority in terms of not missing key academic subjects, but every effort is made to look at each individually so as to ensure that the inevitable compromises are kept to a minimum. We do not recommend learning more than one instrument in school, though a second could be started after the conclusion of the secondary school exams in Year 6.

It takes maturity for a child to cope with the discipline of coming in and out of lessons as well as the



requirements of daily practice and parents are asked to take advice in advance, from their child's form teacher as regards the timing of starting an instrument. If in doubt it is better to postpone! We are always happy to discuss the options available in terms of which teachers have capacity to take on an additional pupil and which instrument would be best. Your child may also have strong views and indeed the final choice must rest with him or her – learning an instrument should not be “imposed”. To help in the choice, trial lessons are always possible as is watching one of the ensembles.

Whatever the instrument, parental involvement is key. Not only is daily practice essential but intelligent support of practice is also crucial. Instruments and music also have to be in the right place at the right time! Regularity of practice is more important than time (one hour's practice the day before the lesson achieves little). If parents wish, we can suggest a “FH recommended” music tutor to work with your child at home working under the guidance of the Falkner House music specialist and following the school programme. Parents will be in charge of payment and supervision of any such tutor.

Many Falkner House pupils are selected for the Royal College of Music and the National Children's Orchestra, and we are proud of their success.

Lessons are charged on a termly basis (in arrears). The intention is for there to be 10 lessons per term and/or 30 lessons per year. Please see the details of costs in the fees section. Every effort is made to “catch up” potentially in a subsequent term on lessons missed on account of school trips, pupil illness, external examinations, etc. but this is not guaranteed. We have found it very helpful when starting an instrument to have a trial period of five lessons. At that point, if you would like your child either to



change instruments or stop learning an instrument you would not be charged for any further lessons. Subsequent to that, a term's notice of cancellation is required before giving up or changing instruments, to avoid fees being charged in lieu. If, however, there is a waiting list for the instrument, the notice requirement may be waived.

Parents will have direct contact with their child's individual music teacher to liaise about lessons, practice, etc. Each child's musical progress is analysed and discussed on a regular basis. The music staff are happy



to discuss the appropriate size and quality of instrument as well as the hire or purchase options (see below). Any music books required will be ordered by the music teacher with the cost being included in the subsequent term's invoice.

Children will be invited to play in assembly (8.45 – 9.00 am) or at a concert (accompanied by piano if necessary) and you will be emailed in good time so that, hopefully, parents and family can join the audience. This should not be seen as a “performance” instead, an opportunity to play in front of a very supportive group of friends! Details are found on the school website Fixtures Calendar. We also run

several orchestral groups which meet once a week pre-school – children are invited to join one of these when deemed appropriate. These are charged for on a termly basis. In addition we host small chamber groups which form and reform regularly and are free of charge. Punctuality is important for the pre-school groups and children must arrive before 8.00 am to allow time to tune all the instruments.

Children are entered, as appropriate and if desired, for the ABRSM grade examinations – please see Parent Handbook music exams.



Purchase or rental of instruments

There are clearly a number of options but below are a few recommendations. Some shops will offset rental fees against purchase price if you buy within a certain period. Some also run a system of purchase with buy back later when your child may need a larger or better-quality instrument. It's always worth looking into second hand options. Out-of-London shops will usually supply instruments, etc. by post. In all rental or purchase and buy back arrangements, parents need to set up a contract and pay the outlet themselves. Parents should insure all instruments and label everything including bows, cases, etc.

Strings: Violin, cello or viola, guitar:

- Stringers of London www.stringersmusic.com 99 Lisson Grove London NW1 6UP 020 7224 9099 Maureen Morrison is generally very helpful

Guitar: 1/2 sized classical nylon string guitars are perfect beginner instruments for y1-y4, 3/4 sized are good from y3-y6.

- Best quality budget option: <https://www.londonguitarstudio.com/p/valencia-12-size-guitar>
- More expensive option £150: <https://www.londonguitarstudio.com/p/rodrigo-12-size-classical-guitar-480mm>

Footrest (essential for good posture, £15) <https://www.londonguitarstudio.com/p/km-black-footstool-model-14670>

Case A good case with a pocket for music is quite important. It is nice to add a keyring or ribbon to them so the pupils can tell them apart. Eg. <https://www.londonguitarstudio.com/p/12-size-classical-cover-basic>

Brass: Trumpet or French horn:

- **Phil Parker, the Brass Musical Instrument Specialists** www.philparker.biz 106a Crawford Street, London, W1H 2HZ 0207 486 8206
- **Prozone Music** www.prozonemusic.com 20a Station Road Chesham Bucks HP5 1DH 01494 776262 Probably the better but less convenient being out of London

Wind:

Recorder: Yamaha is a good choice for beginner instruments, they have great intonation and make a good sound for their price (around £25/£30) e.g. **Yamaha** YRS 32B Descant Recorder, Baroque Fingering System. A cleaning rod is also required.

Flute: Yamaha is a good choice for beginner instruments, they are well made and will probably take you a little further than the Jupiter and Trevor James models. However, this comes at a slightly steeper price (around £475 for a new model).



Clarinet: The beginner Buffet Crampon instruments are good quality instruments (B12 will get you further than a cheaper model; c.£250/£300). Jupiter do make cheaper instruments, although these are slightly less good quality.

Reeds: Rico Orange box strength 1 1/2 or Vandoren blue box 1 1/2

Saxophone: Please note that all children will start with the alto saxophone. Yamaha, Trevor James and John Packer brands are recommended. The Yamahas are usually a little more expensive, but they are a good brand from beginners all the way up.

Slings/harness - should not be too long or short - the mouthpiece should be guided straight towards the mouth: the student shouldn't have to move towards the mouthpiece.

Mouthpieces: Selmer mouthpieces C*/C** are of a good standard - try a couple of each out and see what works best. The Yamaha 4c is also a good mouthpiece and Yamaha instruments, usually come with a mouthpiece.

Reeds: Rico Orange or Vandoren Blue strength 2.

- **Kensington Chimes Music (for recorders only)** www.chimesmusic.com 9 Harrington Road London SW7 3ES 020 7589 9054
- **Howarth of London** www.howarth.uk.com 31 Chiltern St. London W1U 7PN 020 7935 2407 Excellent for the purchase of B flat clarinets (the standard instrument) and a trusted place for repairs. Call the repair department in advance to discuss the problem and to make a booking.
- **Wood, Wind & Reed** www.wwr.co.uk 106 Russell Street, Cambridge CB2 1HU 01223 500442 Good for Amati C clarinets and Elkhart C clarinets, (sometimes used in the initial stages by young players who cannot reach the keys of the more usual B flat clarine). Options for buy back when ready to move on to the B flat clarinet.
- **John Packer Ltd** www.johnpacker.co.uk 141 Staplegrove Road Taunton Somerset, TA2 6AF 01823 282386 Useful for John Packer C clarinet and simplified C clarinet hire and purchase which can be useful on a temporary basis for young players with small hands.
- **All Flutes Plus** 60-61 Warren Street London W1T 5NZ www.allflutesplus.com, afp@allflutesplus.com 020 7388 8438
- **Reeds:** Reeds Direct Cambridge Rapid delivery of reeds. 0800 0969 440

Piano:

All children learning the piano need to have a piano at home. The piano can be an keyboard so long as it is full-range (88 keys) with fully weighted keys.

- **Chappell of Bond Street** www.chappell-bond-st.co.uk 152-160 Wardour Street London W1F 8YA Tel: 020 7432 4400
- **Jacques Samuel Pianos (Edgware Rd).** www.jspianos.com 142 Edgware Road London W2 2DZ Tel: 020 7723 8818

Electric pianos: The best and longest lasting electric pianos are Yamaha Clavinova P90 or Yamaha Auris.

Suggested concerts, workshops, courses etc.

Week-end Workshops:

- BBC SO Family Orchestra & Chorus Workshop, all ages and levels
www.bbc.co.uk/events/eq9j3d
- RCM: Royal College of Music, Sparks Festive Family Music, all ages and levels
www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks/

Orchestra courses (Christmas, Easter or Summer)

- String Wise: age 6 to 14, any level (from starters) www.stringwise.com
- NCO: National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain, age 7-10, Grades 3 to 6 www.nco.org.uk/
- NCWO: National Children's Wind Orchestra, age 10 to 19, Grade 5 and above www.ncwo.org.uk
- DYOW: Dulwich Youth Orchestra, aged 7 - 18. www.dyodulwich.com
- NPSO: National Preparatory School Orchestra, Grade 2 to 5 and above www.npsso.co.uk/
- Gloucester Academy of Music: International Holiday Music Courses 2012 www.gamweb.co.uk

Choir Workshop (Easter)

- The Junior Choral Course, choir, all ages <http://thejuniorchoralcourse.co.uk>

Family Concerts: Children can often try instruments before and after concerts ● Barbican Hall: LSO Discovery Family Concerts

www.barbican.org.uk/music/event-detail.asp?ID=11813

- Royal Festival Hall: Funharmonics concerts
www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/classical-season/london-philharmonic-orchestra/lpo-funharmonics
- Wigmore Hall: family concerts
www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/productions/sing-a-story-schools-concert-
- Cadogan Hall family concerts: www.cadoganhall.com/whats-on/genres/family-events

