

FALKNER HOUSE MUSIC NOTES 2023-24



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. Children will only learn 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 a pupil and which instrument would be best. Your child may also have strong views and indeed learning an instrument should not be "imposed". To help in the choice, towards the of Reception, trial lessons are offered on all instruments.

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). Your child may need extra tuition/help at home, especially before an exam or performance. We would be more than happy to recommend a "FH approved" tutor who will work under the guidance of the school music teacher. It may also be possible that the school teacher can help at home.



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. If there have been less than ten lessons in a term on account of school trips, pupil illness, external examinations, etc. every effort is made to "catch up" potentially in a subsequent term but this is not guaranteed. If it is possible to give additional lessons then parents will be asked as to whether they would like this to happen – each additional lessons would be charged on a pro-rata basis.

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 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.

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

Children have plenty of opportunities to perform. We have three assemblies a week, two mini concerts per term (for Lower School) and three formal/evening concerts a year (the Spring concert takes place at St Mary the Boltons). Our piano teacher will always be available to accompany 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 two string orchestras (junior and senior), a wind band and two choirs which meet once a week, and 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

For string instruments it is recommended that you rent anything up to and including quarter size; from half size onwards, it makes more sense to purchase. When moving up a size, some shops (like Stringers) will allow you to offset at least some of the cost of the new instrument against the cost of the old one. Second hand instruments are often better than new ones and they tend to be cheaper. 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.

Violin, viola and cello:

Stringers of London www.stringersmusic.com 99 Lisson Grove London NW1 6UP 020 7224 9099. Ian, the shop manager, is very helpful as is Maureen- they know Mr Andrei and Falkner House very well!

Guitar: 1/2 sized classical nylon string guitars are perfect beginner instruments for Y1-Y4, 3/4 sized are good from Y3-Y6 www.londonguitarstudio.com

- Best quality budget option: Valencia 12
- More expensive option: rodrigo-12-480mm
- **Footrest** essential for good posture, 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. E.g. Classical cover basic size 12

Wind:

Recorder: Yamaha is a good choice for beginner instruments, they have great intonation and make a good sound for their price 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.

Clarinet: The beginner Buffet Crampon instruments are good quality instruments (B12 will get you further than a cheaper model). Jupiter do make cheaper though slightly less good quality instruments. Reeds: Rico Orange or Vandoren blue strength 1 1/2

Saxophone: All children will start with the alto saxophone and 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 an option 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.

Child-friendly Concerts (in the afternoon and at weekend)

- Please check Southbank Centre, Cadogan Hall, Barbican, Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music websites, searching for “family events”
- We will also notify parents if we hear of future suitable events

Orchestra courses (Christmas, Easter or Summer)

- **Stringwise:** non-auditioned 4 day holiday course for children aged 6-14 including orchestra, chamber music, singing, games and instrument technique www.stringwise.com
- **National Children’s Orchestra of Great Britain (NCO):** audition-based orchestra course for children aged 8-14 offering in-person coaching with incredible tutors, musicians and conductors, as well as performing opportunities for different orchestras within the organisation www.nco.org.uk
- **Dulwich Youth Orchestra (DYO):** music course in South London (JAGS) involving different orchestras meeting every morning for a 5 day course during the holiday www.dyodulwich.com
- **London Youth Conservatoire:** Saturday orchestra, ensemble and choir course based in Parsons Green www.londonyouthconservatoire.org.uk
- **South London Youth Orchestra (SLYO):** orchestra course meeting 3 times a year during school holidays at JAGS, offering coaching and performing opportunities
- **Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra:** meeting in Wimbledon every Sunday (term-time) and performing 3 times a year www.stoneleighyouthorchestra.org.uk,

Choir Workshop (Easter)

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

