

Dear Parent/Guardian

Thank you for showing interest in the 11+ Music Scholarship. This letter aims to fill in some details and answer questions you may have.

Why do we have Music Scholarships?

Live music plays a central role in School life, whether it's for assemblies, for a concert, for a carol service, or for playing at local community events. We have a range of ensembles and choirs for all age groups, and we encourage our pupils who sing or who play instruments to get involved. We need talented young people to set an example and to give a strong lead to others, so that all pupils can be inspired to achieve their best.

What happens in the examination?

The examination is held in January and consists of a number of practical assessments.

We will arrange to hear each candidate individually. They will be asked to perform at least one piece on their first instrument and another piece on a second instrument if they play one. They might choose to sing something instead. They should ensure they bring any piano accompaniment parts which are needed, and one of the music staff will play for them. There will also be sight reading, sight singing, and aural tests.

On the same day we will also hear the candidates play together as part of an ensemble together with other candidates. The music for this will be provided on the day and will be at an appropriate level for each candidate. If candidates are offering an orchestral instrument and piano, we would ask that they play on the orchestral instrument for this session. If they are offering more than one orchestral instrument, one part will be supplied which fits best with the rest of the ensemble. Candidates who only play the piano as their instrument will not be disadvantaged, as the music will include a piano part.

What standard should my child have reached?

If your child has passed Grade Three with a merit or distinction and is a good sight reader, that would be an indication that they are about the right standard to consider entering the Scholarship. Another indication would be having sung in a choir, enthusiastically, for two or three years. These are by no means the only pointers to a good candidate **so if you are unsure, please contact me to discuss whether or not your child is suitable**. We are looking for the potential for passing Grade Five with distinction by the time they are about thirteen.

Do I need to know anything else?

We make every effort to put candidates at their ease as we do understand that they may well feel nervous or anxious about the examination.

There is no written paper for the 11+ Music Scholarship.

All pupils in the School study class music in S1 and S2, after which it is an option. There is no requirement for Music Scholars to study music in class beyond S2, but many do choose to do so.

In order to help us assess your child's ability and potential, we would like to read brief written comments from two people who have good knowledge of their musicianship, such as their instrumental teacher and class music teacher. Another appropriate person could be their choir leader, band leader, or drama group co-ordinator (singing is often an important part of plays). We will write to them asking for these comments, so I would be grateful if you would supply their names, addresses and email addresses. Anything they write will only be seen by our full-time music staff and the Head, and will be treated as confidential. Please enter their contact details in the space provided on the application form once you know they are willing to act in this way.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at School on 0114 2668408 or via email at amjordan@birkdaleschool.org.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Adrian Jordan
Director of Music