



### **Music at Polam Hall**

Music is taught to all students from Year 3 to Year 9 (Lower 5). Within the Junior School Department students receive half an hour of singing plus half an hour of Music Making each week. Those in the Senior School also have an hour's lesson each week. The overriding purpose of these lessons is to give all of our students a lasting sense of pleasure and encouragement with regard to music, which they will hopefully carry into their adult life. Not everyone will be a musician, but all can enjoy music at a deeper level because of their experience whilst at school.

Our older students opt to study music at GCSE and A Level. Our smaller classes offer our examination candidates a high degree of personal tuition and our results certainly reflect this. At present there are six students working at GCSE level: four in Year 10 and two in Year 11. We have one student who has continued her AS studies into A2. All our examination candidates are actively involved in the musical life of the school.

Polam Hall has a strong musical reputation. There are a number of extra-curricular ensembles which a large cross-section of the school can access. Inevitably the majority require an innate understanding of music and its unique vocabulary. However, wherever possible, we wish to encourage non-specialist students who want to be involved in a music activity purely for the sheer enjoyment of collective music-making. Ensembles comprise:

- The Senior School Choir – available to girls from Year 7 (Lower 4) to Year 13 (Upper 6).
- The Vocal Ensemble – by invitation to girls from Year 10 (Middle 5) to Year 13 (Upper 6).

- Rewind – contemporary band available to all Senior School students (guitar / saxophone / keyboard / vocals).
- Senior Orchestral Ensemble – available to students from Grade 3 / 4 upwards.
- Junior School String Orchestra – available to our younger and less experienced string players.
- String Quartet – by invitation to string players of Grade 4 upwards.
- Clarinet Quartet – by invitation to players of Grade 4 upwards
- Woodwind Ensemble – available to woodwind players of Grade 2 / 3 upwards.

At the present time a number of our ensembles are run by VMTs, which inevitably frees up the Head of Music to offer other extra-curricular activities. Typical activities include involvement with the School Production, organising our regular Coffee Concerts or responding to particular pupils' musical interests.

Students from Year 6, Year 9, and Year 11 are able to audition for instrumental and vocal scholarships. In general these last for five years, apart from Year 11, and require successful candidates to play an active part in the musical life of the School. The Head of Music is at liberty to rescind any scholarship if the pupil fails to meet this condition.

Inevitably the Music Department plays an important role in promoting the School within the Darlington community and further afield. We therefore make a point of accepting as many requests as possible to perform outside of school, with as varied a number of ensembles as appropriate. The students benefit from performing in a range of different venues and the public appreciate the quality and enthusiasm of our students.