

Nottingham Girls' High School Music Department



**Chris Clarke, MMus BMus (Hons), PGCE
Director of Music**

Chris has been teaching at NGHS for 24 years, the majority of the time as Head of Department. A graduate of Surrey University – BMus (Hons) 1st class and MMus – Chris has made full use of her varied practical musical skills both in and outside the classroom.

As a first-study pianist, Chris excels in repertoire work although she has also performed locally as soloist in several Mozart piano concertos. She particularly enjoys piano accompaniment and studied this for her Master's degree. Chris is also an experienced percussionist, specialising in orchestral timpani and tuned percussion, and won the prize for Best Degree Recital for her undergraduate degree. She trained with James Blades and has performed with various orchestras in many of the top concert halls in the UK. Chris is also an accomplished conductor, specialising in musical theatre, and she has worked extensively with various companies both here and in America.

Chris loves her job at NGHS and is extremely proud to be working in such a fine and thriving Music Department.

Working Days: Monday - Thursday

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**Mark Rolfe, BA (Hons), DipMUS DipLCM (TD)
Extra Curricular Music Coordinator
Junior School Music Teacher/Teacher of Guitar**

Mark has been at NGHS since 1999 and has witnessed the Music Department go from strength to strength. He holds a First Class Honours Degree in Music and Sound, a Diploma in Music and a Diploma in Electric Guitar. Alongside teaching Mark is an active musician releasing music as both solo artist and with several bands. He is the songwriter and producer of the band 'Lorna' who have toured across the continent and in the USA and have shared the stage with Echo and the Bunnymen, The Wedding Present and The Lemonheads. A Guitarist by trade Mark also plays a number of other instruments including Clarinet, Piano and 'Cello. At NGHS he is director of the extra curricular programme including roles such as conducting bands and organising concerts and tours.

Alongside Isla Keys he is on the committee of Nottingham Young Musician of the Year which has launched many musical careers including that of Sheku Kanneh-Mason. He runs the small independent record label 'Winnetka Records'

Working Days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

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**Emily Lawson, BA (Hons), PGCE
Teacher of Music**

Emily has been teaching Music to Years 4 to 13 at NGHS for 13 years. She is a clarinettist and has played in chamber wind ensembles, wind orchestras and orchestras including the National Youth Wind Orchestra, Nottingham Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Restoration. Emily has a BA in Music from the University of Nottingham where she specialised in clarinet performance and a PGCE in Music Education from Nottingham Trent University. She also plays the tenor saxophone and piano and has, more recently, taken up singing.

She teaches composition at GCSE and A Level and loves helping her students to experiment with different styles and techniques and realise their potential in this area. Outside of school Emily has set up a well-being choir for mums and sings in the Nottingham Playhouse Choir. Having become more involved in the musical direction of the productions at NGHS, Emily's ambition is to one day be on stage in a musical herself!

Working Days: Tuesday - Friday

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Paul Skinner: Teacher of 'Cello, Double Bass, Harp and Oboe

Paul has taught at NGHS since 2005 and has lots of experience as both a music teacher and professional musician. In Nottingham he has been an adjudicator for Nottingham Young Musician of the Year, is the Senior 'Cello tutor of Nottingham Youth Orchestra and has been Principal 'Cellist with Nottingham Symphony Orchestra.

Paul is the Principal Harpist with the Jersey Symphony Orchestra and also part of the management team. He has appeared in Proms Concerts with the British Police Symphony Orchestra, in String Quartets at the Royal Albert Hall, shows at The Bloomsbury Theatre in Sloane Square, been Principal in St John's Smith Square, in the Gilbert and Sullivan Festival at Buxton Opera House, and is the 'Cellist in the children's television programme "The Worst Witch".

Paul has played Harp with dancers from Strictly and in the summer joins The Ibiza Proms Orchestra as the Harpist and tours many venues in the UK performing in shows, and has shared the stage with STEPS, Craig David and Natalie Imbruglia.

Working Days: Monday, Thursday, Friday

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Claire Seedhouse, BMus (Hons): Teacher of Violin

After gaining her Music degree, Claire went on to build her reputation as a violin teacher, teaching both privately and across various schools in Nottinghamshire. She joined the NGHS peripatetic staff in 2015.

Claire enjoys performing in many orchestral groups such as Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra, The Helix ensemble, the Orchestra of the Restoration, The Bach Society ensemble, and the Music for Everyone ensemble. She also plays with the Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

Claire has been a tutor for the Nottingham Youth Orchestra since 2000, tutoring in all three orchestras, but is currently a violin tutor for the Senior Orchestra who have recently performed with Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

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Helen Bell, BA (Hons) PGDip: Teacher of Viola

Having received a scholarship to study Viola at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with world renowned Violist Rivka Golani, Helen studied in a masterclass environment for seven years and learnt a huge amount about teaching techniques and Viola pedagogy.

She has over 20 years of performing experience, including extensive UK and international touring of venues from Arts Centres to folk clubs and festivals to world-renowned concert halls, alongside her varied teaching career. She was the Director of Sandwell Intermediate String Orchestra which led to the development of the first Chamber Music Programme.

Helen performs regularly alongside Jon Boden from the award winning band 'Bellowhead' and has recently performed with Opera North and in the BBC Maida Vale studios. She runs the highly acclaimed folk record label 'Hudson Records' along with her husband.

Working Day: Tuesday

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**Tim Harris, BA
Teacher of Guitar**

Tim joined the Music Department in 2006 and has guided countless young guitarists into careers in music. He holds a BA in Music alongside qualifications in Guitar, Music Technology and Piano. He is a celebrated composer of children's songs and his original songs and music videos are known across the globe.

Working Days: Monday – Friday



**Tim Browne, BA (Hons)
Teacher of Saxophone and Clarinet**

One of our longest serving members, Tim has been working at NGHS for 41 years. He holds a degree in Music from Huddersfield University and qualifications in Clarinet and Sax. Also a keen flautist, Tim has inspired many woodwind players throughout his time at NGHS. He has a keen interest in Mozart and the classical period and is a huge fan of Bob Dylan. Tim has been running the school's swing band for over 40 years and has seen many accolades during that time.

Workings Days: Monday – Thursday

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**Emily Jones, BA (Hons) Dip ABRSM
Teacher of Bassoon**

Emily is one of the latest additions to our team, joining in January 2020. She has a First Class Honours Degree in Music from the University of Nottingham, where she specialised in contemporary flute performance. She performs regularly with a variety of ensembles across Nottingham and Derbyshire, as well as giving solo recitals where she really loves to play new and exciting repertoire.

Emily has already developed her first ensemble and has joined the Symphonic Orchestra team at school.

Working Day: Thursday

Nottingham Girls' High School Music Department



**Gordon Truman, LRAM MISM
Teacher of Brass**

Following studies at The Royal Academy of Music, Gordon has always made music his career. A respected performer in many Midlands based theatre orchestras, Gordon also plays trumpet for the nationally renowned orchestra 'Viva'. With over 30 year's experience at NGHS, Gordon continues to inspire and guide many of our young musicians. Alongside his work at school, Gordon teaches Trumpet at The University of Nottingham.

He has been instrumental in developing brass bands and ensembles in school and supports the Symphonic Orchestra here also.

Working Day: Thursday

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**Jilly Quine, LLCM TD Cert Ed
Teacher of Flute**

Jilly started playing the flute aged 13 and has never looked back. She turned down a university place to study Sociology to take Music at a local college and refers to this as 'the best decision of her life'. She has studied with the likes of Russell Parry, John Francis, Kate Hill and Chris Hankin.

Jilly has been instrumental in the success of music at NGHS and her flute choirs have performed in many international tours and taken part in masterclasses with world-class tutors such as Janna Huneke and Krzysztof Kaczka. She is a former member of the London Flute Ensemble.

Working Days: Tuesday - Thursday

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**Jay Robertson, BA (Hons)
Teacher of Drum Kit and Percussion**

Jay began playing percussion at the age of 11 and passed his Grade 8 Drum Kit with distinction in 1999. He then went on to graduate from the Leeds College of Music with a BA Hons Jazz degree in July 2004 majoring in Drum Kit performance while studying under Tony Mann (Chet Baker, Miles Davis). He also studied with guest lecturers; Dave Hassell (Cuban percussion), Jim Chapin (Moeller technique) and Omar Puente (Latin percussion studies). Jay continues to have a busy performance schedule alongside his percussion and drum kit teaching including his long standing work with Dan Swana (Swing Out Sister) – an internationally acclaimed bassist, pianist, vocalist, composer and educator.

Jay joined the Music Department in 2015 and has been instrumental in the school's music excellence.

Working Days: Monday - Friday

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**Gill Shaw, BMus (Hons), MEd, PGCE DipABRSM
Teacher of Piano**

Gill is a piano teacher and accompanist at NGHS. She graduated as a first study pianist from the University of Huddersfield in 1997, before completing her PGCE at the University of Leeds. Since graduating, she has gained over 20 years' experience working in varied roles and settings within music education, both as an instrumental and classroom teacher. As a strong advocate of the wide-ranging benefits of positive musical experiences and participation, Gill aims to provide a fun, supportive and creative learning environment tailored to each student.

Gill is a member of ISM, a professional member of EPTA, and a founding member of the Curious Piano Teachers. In 2022 she graduated from the Royal College of Music with a Masters in Education (distinction) and presented her research at the Research in Music Education conference. She has extensive experience accompanying students and ensembles across all grade levels and genres and is the accompanist for the Nottingham Hospitals Choir.

Working Days: Tuesday - Friday

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**Kevin Leese, GRSM, ARCM, LTCL
Teacher of Piano**

Kevin Leese has been teaching the piano at Nottingham Girls' High School since September 1992, teaching over 1000 pupils in his time at the school. He was fortunate to attend the Royal College of Music between 1974 - 1978, finessing the art of piano playing under Miss Phyllis Sellick, going on to achieve his PGCE Music Teaching qualification at London University.

After gaining his qualifications, Kevin began his teaching career in 1980 at Nottingham University. During the same period, Kevin also taught at Trent Polytechnic, Clarendon College, South Nottinghamshire Music School and East Nottinghamshire Music School. In addition, he conducted the choir at South Notts Music School entering various music competitions and Kevin also accompanied Clarendon College Choir at various venues including St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Outside of school Kevin loves attending concerts, as well as spending time with his dogs, in the countryside.

Working Days: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

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**Isla Keys, MA (Hons) ATCL PGCE MISM
Teacher of Voice**

Isla Keys gained a piano teaching diploma whilst at school, played 1st flute with the Angus Youth Orchestra, then took up timpani & other percussion at the University of St.Andrews, where she became Vice-President of the Musical Society. Following graduation MA (Hons) in French & Music, she studied singing in Switzerland with Hansia Gmur, John Duxbury and Sena Jurinac as well as piano accompaniment with Madeleine Depraz, and began to perform professionally. She conducted the Choir of the Church of Scotland in Geneva for 6 years prior to training several youth choirs in the UK then completed a PGCE, becoming Head of Music at a local prep school until its closure in 2014. Throughout, she continued to sing solo soprano in many performances in the UK, France, Italy & Switzerland.

Vocal coach to the choristers of St.Mary's Church in Nottingham, Isla Keys has been a member of the Music Teachers' Association for some 25 years, and served as a committee member from 2014-2020. With a particular interest in young developing voices, teaching singing both in schools and at home has now become her main occupation, with any remaining spare time spent knitting, sewing and furthering genealogical research, but she is never far from a piano & her music.

Working Days: Tuesday - Thursday

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**Freya Hales, BMus (Hons) PGCE
Teacher of Voice**

After graduating from The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with a degree in vocal studies, Freya went on to obtain her PGCE in music and begin a career in secondary music teaching.

She has been a vocal tutor and choral mistress at Nottingham Girls' High School for the last 11 years. Freya is passionate about choral music and her choirs have done several European tours. Most recently she led the GDST northern girls Choral Sing day leading five other schools in a full day's rehearsal and evening performance.

Outside of school, Freya is conductor and vocal coach for the renowned Cantamus Girls' Training choir which she herself was a member of for 10 years.

Freya has a wealth of performance and teaching experience and is keen to encourage young people to discover a love for music and singing.

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**Helen Brackenbury, BMus, MA
Teacher of Voice**

Helen Brackenbury began her singing career with The Cantamus Girls' Choir and its late founder, Pamela Cook. She went onto study at The Royal Academy Of Music, completing BMus and MA degrees, as well as The Academy's opera course. Helen has sung operatic roles for Opera Holland Park and Longborough Festival Opera, as well performing as a soloist in some of the UK's leading performance venues.

She now teaches singing and directs choirs across Nottingham and Derby. Some of her roles include: Vocal Coach for Cantamus Training Choir, Director of the Nottingham Playhouse Choir, Re-founding Director of Derby Cathedral Junior Choir as well as Vocal Coach to the Cathedral Choir and singing teacher at Nottingham Girls' High School, Trent College and Redhill Academy.

Working Day: Friday