



Performing at Rupert House

Every child at Rupert House performs, from their first term in Early Years to their last term in Year 6. Over the course of a year that means church services, mini musicals, shows, concerts and carols — on our own stage and well beyond it.

Much of what we do takes us out into Henley and further afield: St Mary's Church, the Kenton Theatre, Henley Town Hall, care homes across the town, and for our older children, the arena stage at the O2 in London. Performing in front of a real audience, in a real venue, is one of the quickest ways to build a child's confidence — and it is something our children do again and again and enjoy enormously! This is what a year of performing looks like at Rupert House.

Throughout the year

Performing is woven into the ordinary rhythm of the week, not saved up for big occasions.

Form assemblies, singing assemblies and seasonal assemblies

All year groups

Each form takes its turn to lead an assembly, sharing work they are proud of, themed around their curriculum topics or sharing exciting experiences from trips and visits. Fortnightly singing assemblies bring the whole school together to learn new repertoire, work on part-singing and simply enjoy making a big sound. Children also often have the opportunity to perform at the beginning of assemblies. At the end of each term, seasonal assemblies gather it all up into a celebration for the whole school.

ABRSM Showcase Concerts

All year groups

Children learning an instrument or singing perform the pieces they have been preparing for their ABRSM examinations each term. The concerts are deliberately low-pressure and warmly supportive: a beginner playing eight bars for their Prep Test is applauded exactly as generously as a Grade 5 pianist. Performing regularly in front of others is the best possible preparation for exams, auditions and senior school scholarships.

Autumn term

A term of services, carols and Christmas shows — and the term in which our choirs sing most often in the community.

Harvest Service at St Mary's

All year groups | St Mary's Church, Henley

The school walks down to St Mary's for our Harvest Service, with children from every year group taking part as readers, soloists and choristers, and the whole school singing together. Singing in a church, with its acoustic and its sense of occasion, is quite different from singing in the school hall, and it is many children's first experience of performing in a large public building.

Remembrance Service

Senior Voices

Senior Voices lead the music for our Remembrance Service, supporting the readings and the silence with carefully chosen repertoire. It asks something different of the children: restraint, stillness and a sense of responsibility for the mood of the occasion.

Carols at The Kenton

Senior Voices | The Kenton Theatre, Henley

Senior Voices take part in the community event 'Carols at the Kenton', one of the oldest working theatres in the country and a much-loved Henley landmark. Performing on a professional stage, with theatre lighting and a full house, is a genuine thrill for the children. We prepare two contrasting Christmas songs and join together with other local primary schools for a sparkly, energetic finale!

Carols at The Manor Care Home

Senior Voices | The Manor, Henley

Senior Voices take carols to residents at The Manor, singing in close quarters and staying afterwards to chat. It is one of the most valued things we do. The children see immediately what their singing means to an audience who may have been looking forward to it for weeks, and they learn to perform generously — making eye contact, choosing familiar carols, inviting the room to join in. Many children say it is their favourite event of the year.

Carols at Chiltern Edge Care Home

Junior Voices | Chiltern Edge, near Henley

Our younger choir has its own carol visit, giving children in the junior years the same experience of singing for the community. For many it is their first performance outside school. They prepare a short programme of carols and songs, learn how to project in an unfamiliar room, and discover how much pleasure a small choir can give. It is a gentle, joyful introduction to the idea that music is something you share rather than something you simply practise.

Early Years Christmas Nativity

Early Years

Our youngest children tell the Christmas story in their own way, with costumes, actions, simple lines and a great deal of singing. Every child has a part. Staff work patiently on the things that are genuinely hard when you are three or four: standing in the right place, waiting for your turn, speaking loudly and clearly, and carrying on when something unexpected happens. It is warm, funny and frequently unforgettable, and it is the first entry in a child's performing life here.

Key Stage 1 Christmas Show

Years 1 and 2

Years 1 and 2 put on a full Christmas show with a story, songs, spoken parts and choreography. Children take on solos and small-group numbers, while everyone learns the whole score. Over several weeks of rehearsal they build stamina, learn stagecraft and get used to holding a scene together as a cast. Seeing children of this age remember lines, cues and lyrics in front of a packed hall is a real measure of how far they have come.

Christmas Service at St Mary's

All year groups | St Mary's Church, Henley

The whole school gathers at St Mary's for our Christmas Service of readings and carols. Children from Year 6 read, and our all our year groups, choirs and musicians perform their own items alongside the congregational carols. A parent and staff choir and orchestra including former pupils comes together in support of the children, which makes it all the more of a community event. It is the point in the term where all the separate strands of singing come together, and where families, staff and children mark the start of Christmas in the heart of Henley.

Spring term

The busiest term for productions, with mini musicals for our youngest performers and an arena stage for our oldest.

Young Voices at the O2

Years 4, 5 and 6 | The O2 Arena, London

Years 4 to 6 join thousands of other children at the O2 for Young Voices, the largest children's choir concert in the world. They spend the autumn and spring learning a demanding programme of pop, gospel, classical and show numbers by heart, complete with signing and choreography, then perform it under arena lights alongside professional musicians and guest artists. For many it becomes one of the defining memories of their time at Rupert House.

Year 1 Mini Musical

Year 1

Year 1 stage a short musical of their own, 'Little Red Riding Hood', costumes, lines and a set of songs to learn. Every child has a speaking part as well as singing in the chorus, so no one sits at the side. The scale is deliberately manageable: enough to stretch them, short enough to keep the rehearsal process enjoyable. Children work on clear diction, on listening for their cue, and on the confidence to deliver a line and wait for the laugh.

Year 2 Mini Musical

Year 2

Year 2 take on 'Jack and the Beanstalk' as their mini musical, building on everything they learned the year before. Speaking parts are longer, the songs are more demanding, and children take more responsibility for their own characters. Some will discover a taste for acting, others for singing. It is a natural stepping stone towards the bigger productions waiting for them further up the school.

House Music

Years 3 to 6 | Henley Town Hall

House Music is one of the highlights of the year. Anyone who plays an instrument or sings is encouraged to enter, whatever age and stage they are with their music! They are awarded House Points for doing so, with auditions taking place in Music lessons, to which parents are invited. At the finals, each House performs a song and puts forward soloists and ensemble performances made up of Prep pupils to compete for points, all in front of an audience and a panel of carefully chosen adjudicators at Henley Town Hall. The children help to select the House Song repertoire relating to a chosen theme, and the older ones encourage younger housemates in rehearsals and choreograph the performance, so the event develops leadership and teamwork as much as musicianship. It is a joyous occasion and one not to miss!

Lower Prep Show

Years 3 and 4

Years 3 and 4 combine for the Lower Prep Show, a full-length production with a cast drawn from both year groups. Year 4 take on the principal roles, with Year 3 finding plenty to do in the ensemble numbers and crowd scenes. Rehearsals run over several weeks and cover blocking, projection, characterisation and singing in parts. It is the production where many children first realise quite how much they enjoy being on stage.

Easter Service at St Mary's

All year groups | St Mary's Church, Henley

We end the term together at St Mary's with our Easter Service. Children read, sing and lead reflections, and our children perform music chosen for the season. As with Harvest and Christmas, every year group is involved, so even the youngest children take part in a service alongside the oldest. It is a calm, reflective close to a very busy term of performing.

Summer term

Farewells and showcases, ending with the whole school performing together outdoors.

Prep Show at The Kenton

Years 5 and 6 | The Kenton Theatre, Henley

The Prep Show is the culmination of everything our oldest children have built up. Years 5 and 6 perform a full-scale musical at the Kenton Theatre, with lighting, sound, a backstage crew and scenery created by staff and children at Rupert House. Children audition for lead roles, sing solos and ensemble numbers, and take real responsibility for the running of the show. For Year 6 it is a memorable farewell, and it is frequently the thing they talk about at as one of their main highlights at the school.

Summer Showcase

Early Years and Key Stage 1

Our youngest children have a showcase of their own, sharing the songs, dances, poems and artwork they have worked on across the year. It is bright, energetic and designed so that every child appears on stage more than once. Parents get to see how much has changed since the nativity in December: children stand taller, sing louder and speak with far more confidence than they did two terms earlier.

Picnic Concert

All year groups

The year ends with the Picnic Concert, where families bring a rug and a hamper and the whole school performs outdoors in the summer sunshine. Choirs, ensembles, instrumental groups and soloists all take a turn, from beginners playing their first public piece to Year 6 leavers giving their final performance. Staff, parents and pupils come together for a fun finale piece which always raises the roof! It is relaxed and informal, and it shows, in one afternoon, just how much music runs through the school from top to bottom.

Prize Giving

Pre Prep and Year 6

To mark the end of the year, children perform as part of our Prize Giving ceremonies in both Pre Prep and Prep.

Getting involved

No audition is needed to take part in the great majority of what is listed here. Every child sings, every child performs, and every year group appears on stage across the year. Alongside these events we offer individual instrumental and singing lessons, and places in our choirs and ensembles, all of which feed directly into the concerts and productions above. Please encourage your children to join in and if they would like to try a new instrument, please do contact me directly and I will be happy to arrange that (anne.light@ruperthouse.co.uk). Given the role models we are to the children, we hope that lots of the parents will be keen to join the staff and parent choirs and orchestras at our Carol Service and Picnic Concert – no previous experience necessary!