



Diocese of Leeds Music  
Schools Singing Programme

# Choral Director (Maternity Cover) Application Pack

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Closing Date: Monday 15 June 2026, 5pm

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## Contents

<b>Working at Diocese of Leeds Music</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>About the role</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What does the maternity cover role involve?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Job Description</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Person Specification</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>About Diocese of Leeds Music</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A snapshot of musical life in the Diocese of Leeds</b>	<b>9</b>

## Welcome

Diocese of Leeds Music shares music-making and teaching of the highest quality with some of the UK's most disadvantaged children, and I am delighted you are considering joining us. After reading the information in this application pack, I hope you will consider making an application. Colleagues working in the programme have described it as some of the most stimulating, occasionally challenging, yet extremely rewarding work that they have experienced in their careers and this role offers a wealth of opportunity to the successful candidate.

Please note the following dates carefully:

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 15 June 2026, 5pm

**Shortlisting:** Tuesday 16 June 2026

**Interviews:** Monday 29 June 2026

The application form can be accessed as a [Word document](#) or using [Google Docs](#). Completed forms should be sent to [recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk).

Informal enquiries and visits prior to application are very welcome – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to arrange this. I am very happy to speak to interested candidates by phone or in an online meeting.

The maternity cover role is up to 3.5 days per week in term-time and starts on Tuesday 1 September 2026. It is offered as a fixed-term contract for 9 calendar months.

With best wishes and thanks for your interest in the role,



Thomas Leech  
*Director of the Schools Singing Programme*

## Working at Diocese of Leeds Music

Diocese of Leeds Music is at the forefront of choral music in the UK. Its award-winning Schools Singing Programme provided the model for the National Schools Singing Programme, and Leeds Cathedral Choirs are among the most broadcast on BBC radio and television. Recognised with a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, we employ 17 staff across singing and instrumental provision, with partnerships including The Sixteen, Gabrieli, and internationally with the universities of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt and Texas.

Leeds primary schools are at the heart of our programme: it is from this work in schools that choristers at Leeds Cathedral are drawn, offering the successful candidate a remarkable opportunity to shape the next generation of choral singers. In this pack, we have outlined an illustrative schedule and we encourage interested candidates to contact us for a conversation prior to application. We welcome applicants at any stage of their careers, including new graduates and are experienced in tailoring our support and opportunities to our staff's needs.



From left: Junior Boys Choir at the Boys Choirs Festival; Leeds Cathedral Choir sing *Choral Vespers* live on BBC Radio 3; primary school children recording *Sunday Worship* for Radio 4, March 2025.

## About the role

Working as a Choral Director in our Schools Singing Programme is an opportunity to nurture creativity, foster expression, and shape the voices and musical foundations of future generations. We're looking for a skilled leader of children's voices who will deliver the Schools Singing Programme in schools across Leeds, with the opportunity to also support the Junior Choirs, Schools Scholars and Choral Scholars at Leeds Cathedral.

### Whole-class singing sessions

Whole-class singing sessions are the core of our Schools Singing Programme, and are currently delivered in 74 schools, reaching around 6,800 children every week. Led by an expert team, these school day sessions cover a wide range of sacred and secular repertoire and support schools' overall offer for music. Our schools singing curriculum has been developed in consultation with Dr Rebecca Berkley at the University of Reading, with a musicianship and notation resource written for us by Lucinda Geoghegan.

**"The children's enjoyment is evident and they truly sing like angels! Visitors and parishioners over the years have often commented on how beautifully our children sing and that's down to your excellent provision."**

— Diocese of Leeds primary school headteacher



Whole-class school singing sessions.

## What does the maternity cover role involve?

We are seeking term-time maternity cover for nine months from 1 September 2026 for up to 3.5 days per week. The role centres on working with seven primary schools across Leeds each week, providing around 7.5 hours of contact time in 30-minute whole-class sessions. An initial handover period will include shadowing, training (where needed) and familiarisation with our planning and curriculum resources.

For the right candidate, the role can also include supporting the Cathedral Choirs in up to three afternoon sessions and on Sunday mornings, working alongside our Choral Directors in rehearsals and Masses.

The timetable below sets out the full schedule, including the Cathedral options. When completing your application, please indicate which aspects of the role you are interested in.

	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
Morning	Junior Choirs <i>Assisting 8-11</i>	School <i>10-11</i>	Schools <i>9-10</i> <i>10.35-11.35</i>	School <i>10.30-11.30</i>
Afternoon		School <i>1.30-2.30</i>	School <i>1.15-2.15</i>	School <i>1.30-3</i>
After-school		Junior Boys Choir <i>Assisting 4-6</i>	Choral Scholars <i>Assisting 4-6</i>	Schools and Choral Scholars <i>Assisting 4-6</i>



From left: Junior Girls Choir in rehearsal; primary school children from across Leeds at the Great Hall, University of Leeds; Harry Christophers works with members of Leeds Cathedral Choir.

## Job Description

<b>Post Title</b>	Choral Director
<b>Reporting to</b>	Director of the Schools Singing Programme
<b>Time Commitment</b>	Part-time (15–26.5 hours per week, term-time only)
<b>Location</b>	Schools and churches in the Diocese of Leeds
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	1 September 2026
<b>Contract Type</b>	Temporary, nine calendar months from 1 September 2026
<b>Probationary Period</b>	Six months
<b>Remuneration</b>	£10,500–£18,435 per annum, dependent on hours Mileage allowance in fixed profit car scheme and contributory pension scheme available.
<b>Conditions</b>	Music Programme staff must adhere to the Church’s policies for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This post is subject to an Enhanced with Barred Lists check from the Disclosure and Barring Service. This post requires travel and a full UK driving licence. Sympathy with the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church.

## Responsibilities

### Whole-class singing sessions

- Deliver whole-class singing sessions, incorporating content from the NSSP Curriculum.
- Plan sessions and provide termly class reports using our resources and templates.
- Liaise with the head teachers and teaching staff to ensure your provision meets the schools’ needs, including organising appropriate performances and contributions to school and parish Masses.
- Work with colleagues to provide progression routes from school sessions into the after-school choirs.

### After-school choirs (for the right candidate)

- Assist in the direction of the Cathedral Junior Choirs, Schools Scholars and Choral Scholars, helping to attain high standards of musicianship and vocal performance recognised in a variety of opportunities, from local concerts to national broadcasts.
- Where appropriate, work with the Cathedral Senior Boys and Girls Choirs.
- Provide support to colleagues in their choir rehearsals and performances.
- Work with colleagues to ensure a safe environment for the participating children.

*This is a broad description of responsibilities, many of which are supported by colleagues and our administration team, and these may vary over time in your role.*

## **Person Specification**

### **Knowledge and Qualifications**

- Passion for music education and the transformative role that singing plays in schools.
- Education to degree level (or equivalent experience) in any subject.
- Knowledge of current issues, developments and effective practice in music education.
- Understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and best practice.

### **Experience**

- Experience of and ability to provide musical excellence in choral teaching and performance with children of all ages.

### **Skills and Abilities**

- Ability to plan and prioritise work, and work on own initiative.
- Ability to respond flexibly and resiliently to manage competing demands and work independently to deadlines.
- It is desirable to have the ability to lead a rehearsal from the keyboard.
- Strong communication and IT skills.
- Ability to perform all duties and responsibilities in the work locations, with reasonable adjustments if necessary (Equality Act 2010).

## Frequently Asked Questions

We are happy to answer any and all questions that you might have, so please do not hesitate to get in touch. These are some of the questions we are often asked:

- **Will my salary increase over time?**

Yes, we offer cost-of-living increments.

- **Do I have to be Catholic?**

There is no requirement to be Catholic. All employees of the Diocese are expected to be sympathetic to the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church and to uphold the values and principles of safeguarding within the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

- **How do I find out more?**

Please look at our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and the [Schools Singing Programme](#) YouTube channel to see and hear some of our work.

We encourage enquiries prior to application and if you would like an informal conversation with Thomas Leech (Director of the Schools Singing Programme), please contact us by email at [recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk).

- **How much musical autonomy will I have?**

Choral Directors choose their own repertoire for school sessions and choirs. Some of the curriculum has to be delivered using specific material (particularly the musicianship strand) but much of it can be taught using your own material.

- **I've not got much (or any) experience working with children, is it worth applying?**

We have worked with many early career musicians, including new graduates, and provide full support with both planning and delivery. It will be hard work initially, but give you a vast range of highly sought-after teaching and musical skills.

- **I'm an excellent keyboard player. Will I be able to use these skills?**

We are very flexible and would be very happy to adjust schedules to accommodate teaching and playing opportunities within our programme on both piano and organ.

- **Can I apply as a job share?**

Yes, we are open to job share arrangements for the right candidate(s). If this is something you would like to be considered for, please indicate your preferred days and hours on the application form.

## About Diocese of Leeds Music

Diocese of Leeds Music provides a world-class programme of music education to children in state schools. Through the Schools Singing Programme and Keyboard Studies Programme, it nurtures the potential of over 7,500 children and young people across the diverse communities of West and North Yorkshire each week.

Our current staff include Benjamin Saunders, Thomas Leech, eight Choral Directors and four Keyboard Tutors, with a wide range of previous professional experience, musical interests and education. Alongside regular musical broadcasts, our work has been featured on BBC radio and television and in numerous publications, recently including *The Times* and *The Observer*.

**'The mission of this Diocese in Leeds is entirely bound up with music. Look at all those young people singing ... from all different parts of the Diocese. What a marvellous lesson to many of us. Music and the arts have to be at the core: that thirst for beauty, truth and goodness – a triumvirate of terms that are absolutely intertwined.'**

— Sir James MacMillan

**'I was so pleased with the performance of my piece – many thanks to all taking part. It was sung so musically and with a rich and intense atmosphere. It seems wonderful to me that these singers are coming up through your own singing programme. A ray of optimism!'**

— Dame Judith Weir

**'A truly groundbreaking initiative bringing the benefits and joys of singing and learning together to primary schools while also rapidly broadening the foundations of the UK's world-leading choral tradition.'**

— Sir John Rutter

**'It is clearly possible to make a success of bringing state school pupils into a cathedral choir. That's evident from what has happened over the past decade in Leeds [where the] cathedral sends music staff into 70 primary schools in its diocese and trains thousands of children to sing.'**

— The Times, December 2024



## A snapshot of musical life in the Diocese of Leeds: What's happening in 2025/26?

### September

- National Schools Singing Programme (NSSP) curriculum training
- Cathedral Girls Choir Pergolesi Stabat Mater concert, with baroque strings and continuo

### October

- Choristers from Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral visit to Leeds Cathedral

### November

- Weekend workshops and concert with Harry Christophers and singers from *The Sixteen* and *Genesis 16*
- Cathedral Choir Remembrance Sunday concert
- BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship broadcast from Bradford

### December

- Leeds International Concert Season Christmas concert
- Carol services for all choirs
- Huddersfield choirs and schools gala Christmas concert, Huddersfield Town Hall
- BBC Radio 4 Christmas Day broadcast (pre-recorded)

### January

- Training session for school teachers

### February

- Weekend workshops and concert with Paul McCreech, singers and instrumentalists from *Gabrieli*

### March

- NSSP Conference, hosted in Leeds, including a wide range of speakers and workshops
- Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust Schools Concert

### April

- Holy Week and Easter Masses

### May

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Visit by students from Vanderbilt University
- BBC Radio 4 Daily Service recordings

### June

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Community Choir concert
- Diocesan Junior Choirs Festival
- Diocesan Senior Choirs Festival

### July

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust Schools Concert
- Choristers take part in *Gabrieli Roar* residential in Norfolk