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## **Lower School Curriculum Handbook**

**2025-26**

Years 4-9  
Key Stage 2-3

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## Introduction

This booklet contains brief outlines of the academic subjects studied by all students in Years 4 - 9. The aim of the Lower School curriculum is to promote good learning habits across a broad and balanced range of subjects. The emphasis is on development of skills rather than coverage of large quantities of material.

As you will see from the contents, students enjoy a great deal of variety during this phase of their education, prior to the increasing specialisation at more senior levels of the school. Given the nature of the school, we always keep the instrumental/academic balance in mind. Most important of all, we try to provide programmes of study which serve the best educational interests of all our students.

The Learning Support Department supports students who have any specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities; have a Statement of Special Educational Need; or have English as a Second Language. Lessons are predominantly taught in small groups or 1:1 with some in-class support.

All students sit the MidYIS base-line test during one academic lesson at some point in Years 7, 8 or 9 - the timing for a particular student depends on when s/he joins the school. No additional preparation is required for this aptitude test.

If you have any enquiries about your child's timetable, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mrs A Price – Head of Lower School  
Summer 2025

## Junior School

Head of Department: Miss C Tomlinson (Years 4 and 5)

Staff: Mr M Wong (Year 6)

The Junior School curriculum is broadly in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2.

ICT is taught through subject-based topics.

Music, Languages, and PE are taught by specialist staff from the Senior School. Curricular links are maintained between the Junior Department and Year 7.

Children with additional needs or with English as an additional language receive specialist help from the School's Learning Support Department, with which close links are maintained by the Head of the Junior Department.

Students in Year 6 take national standardised tests in May, and use is also made of standardised end-of-year tests for Years 4 and 5.

## Art

Head of Department: Mrs A Boothroyd  
Staff: Miss Tomlinson

### **Lower School (Years 7 & 8)**

Drawing and painting form the nucleus of the course, where students are introduced to drawing for different purposes such as observation, information and design ideas. Students are given opportunities to familiarise themselves with a variety of other disciplines, for example, Painting, Printmaking, 3-Dimensional Studies and Textiles.

Students are encouraged to work from both observation and imagination. The work of established artists, craftspeople and designers, both traditional and contemporary, is introduced to students as an integral rather than separate part of the course, via literature, the Internet and where possible, visiting artists.

The basic requirements for a successful and rewarding visual response, e.g. line, tone, form, colour, composition, design, etc. are covered in Year 7 and reinforced in Year 8.

### **Intermediate Course (Year 9)**

Year 9 Art is an exciting and fun Art and Design year, where students are introduced to more involved and creatively challenging areas such as 3D work, Textiles and IT. Students are able to experiment with new materials and techniques to develop their creative ideas, for example, exploring Collagraph printmaking, painting and using wire, mod roc for 3D including Newclay.

To help enrich their progressing work and ideas, students have the opportunity to see artwork at first-hand by visiting museums and galleries around Manchester, becoming more familiar with traditional and contemporary artists, craftspeople and designers.

Students are encouraged to respond more personally in their work to the variety of different projects presented throughout this year. Year 9 Art is undertaken over two hours per week and any excellent work produced in this year could, if appropriate, be used towards GCSE Art and Design coursework.

## Drama

Head of Department: Mrs J Sherlock  
Staff: Miss Tomlinson

### Lower School (Years 7, 8 & 9)

Drama is taught as a discrete subject when students enter Year 7. In Years 7 and 8 students receive a one-hour lesson a fortnight. In Year 9 students receive one term of Drama under the banner of 'Enrichment'. The Drama curriculum is broad and varied and focuses mainly on building group working skills and developing confidence. In this way drama can assist in the fulfilment of the student's current cognitive and affective needs and in providing for their future personal, social, emotional and intellectual development.

Drama is most frequently seen in the theatre, on television or in the cinema, and associated with performance, costumes, setting and stages. Similarly, in school we often associate drama with script, rehearsal, voice production and the display of acting talent. This type of drama has certain benefits in that it increases children's self-confidence, gives them the opportunity to express themselves in public and allows them the opportunity of appearing on stage. However, it represents only a part of the rich learning and developmental experience that drama has to offer. Chetham's drama curriculum does not dwell just on the display element of drama but will, rather, emphasise the benefits to be gained from the process of exploring life through the creation of plot, theme, fiction and make-believe. The field that drama can explore is as wide as life itself, and the areas of the exploration can be derived from the content. Examining topics through drama will involve children in such activities as

- improvisation
- entering into other lives and situations
- engaging with life issues, knowledge and themes through drama
- honing and shaping drama scenes for the purpose of communicating them to others
- living through a story, making it up as they go along, solving problems in the real and fictional worlds, co-operating with others, and sharing ideas
- thinking about and discussing the patterns in life so that the outcome of encounters and plots will reflect their perception of how life is or might be.

These drama activities build towards the skills necessary to take GCSE Drama. At Chetham's, we study the Cambridge IGCSE which has a large practical element of 60% and demands that students are at ease with group exploration and presenting their work to the class.

## English

Head of Department: Miss C Raffo  
Staff: Ms J Harrison  
Mrs L Jones  
Mrs Sanderson-Leigh  
Mr M Wong

### KS3

English at KS3 offers a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts from different genres, periods and cultures aimed at creating a love of language and reading. Students will explore prose, poetry and drama and develop a range of skills from selecting and retrieving information to analysing and evaluating texts. The programme of study is designed to develop students' reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in order to prepare them for the demands of IGCSE Language and Literature at KS4.

KS3 prose texts often vary each year, but generally include *Lord of the Flies*, *Animal Farm*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Woman in Black* and *Refugee Boy*. We also incorporate poetry and drama into teaching units and ensure that a full Shakespeare text – as opposed to extracts – is taught during Year 9.

Their study of Literature will also inform their own development as writers and students have the opportunity to plan and produce a wide range of texts to meet the needs of various audiences and purposes, alongside building confidence in spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

Speaking, listening and presentation skills are a key part of English; students are provided with ample opportunity to develop their confidence and fluency in a range of contexts through formal oral work and informal group discussion where use of Standard English and clarity of expression is encouraged and expected.

ICT is also included in our curriculum, with particular emphasis on word-processing skills and researching the internet for project work. We also teach some critical analysis of media and the moving image.

The development of personal reading habits is seen as a vital part of English, but we also aim to encourage text as performance, particularly when we study plays. We try to offer extra-curricular theatre visits where possible and subscribe to Digital Theatre which enables all students to access high quality performances.

KS3 have opportunities to take part in Readathon and Book Buzz in conjunction with the School Library.

## Geography

Head of Department: Mr A Kyle  
Staff: Mrs R Booth

In Years 7 – 9 the guidelines of the National Curriculum are followed, including the teaching of skills and themes within the context of particular countries and regions. Students have the opportunity to develop their analytical and enquiry-based skills, for example, in map interpretation and the creation of digital maps, primary data collection, and data presentation and analysis.

The framework for teaching is:

### **Year 7**

The Geography of Me  
Wonders of the world (map skills)  
Extreme environments  
Ecosystems

### **Year 8**

Wild water  
Geography of chocolate  
A risky world  
Future Cities

### **Year 9**

Fast Fashion  
Population Pressures,  
Changing Coasts and Coral Reefs  
ArcGIS digital mapping  
Fieldwork exercises along the NW coast and local environment

The studies are carefully chosen to provide an excellent foundation for GCSE Geography.

People in the environment is the essence of Geography and the spontaneity of world events is always seen as of great relevance to students' understanding and interest. Flexibility is therefore built into the approach to include topical events. Aspects of citizenship will be studied where appropriate.



## History

Head of Department: Mr A Kyle  
Staff: Mrs S Cox  
Mr Wong

The scheme of work covering topics from National Curriculum Key Stage 3 is:

### **Year 7**

The Roman Empire  
Britain 1066 – 1485

### **Year 8**

Depth Study about Richard III  
Britain 1500 – 1750

### **Year 9**

Britain 1750 – 1900: Industrial Revolution  
Empire, Slavery, Trade and Commerce  
Protest and Electoral Reform  
Aspects of the First World War 1914 –1918  
Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905 – 1924

We also aim to cover the topic of voyages of encounter at the end of each year.

Students have the opportunity to develop their essay-writing skills and complete several projects using close analysis of sources, such as an investigation into the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower and the murder of Lord Darnley. They can be set research tasks, and use articles written by professional historians.

Aspects of Citizenship are included across these topics, e.g., the development of parliamentary democracy in Britain and the idea of religious tolerance.

## Mathematics

Head of Department: Mr E Leeson  
Staff: Dr A Clow  
Ms C Dackombe  
Mr M Hay

The aim of the teaching in the Maths Department is to deliver the subject within the constraints of the National Curriculum, consolidating skills acquired up to Key Stage 2, whilst bearing in mind the particular needs of our students. We also provide additional activities designed to stimulate interest and to show how Maths is useful in the wider context.

In **Year 7** students are usually taught in mixed ability classes, depending on the size of the year group. Opportunity is given for students to encounter new topics, consolidate ideas that have been encountered previously and perhaps to re-visit topics that were found difficult or were imperfectly learned first time round. From the outset students should be equipped with all writing materials, a set of geometrical instruments and a scientific calculator such as the Casio FX83 GTX or similar.

In **Year 8** students are usually taught in differentiated sets. Set 1 generally works at a faster rate than Set 2, thereby covering more complex problems. Both sets cover the same topic areas at the same time. There is scope for students to move between sets, usually based on end of year test results.

In **Year 9** we start teaching the GCSE course, following a three-year scheme of work. The topics covered build on previous years' work and are arranged so that they increase in difficulty over the duration of the course.

## Modern Languages

Head of Department: Ms N Geschwendt (German)  
Staff: Mr P Chillingworth (French)  
Mr M Jacobs (French & German)  
Mrs R Jordan (German & French)  
Ms M Jiang (Mandarin)

### Junior School

Students in the Junior Department have the opportunity to experience German, French, and Mandarin. Students learn through songs, games, and activities in a weekly session, giving them an opportunity to explore languages before moving into KS3.

### KS3

German and French are the two languages taught at Chetham's, since it is our considered opinion that language learning is of particularly great worth to musicians. All students who learn German and French in Years 7 and 8 will be encouraged to continue with one language to GCSE level.

In Year 9, the students may continue to study two languages (provided that their musical and instrumental programme allows them to do so) or some just either German or French.

French and German are taught consecutively in Years 7 and 8 on a carousel system of ten termly blocks, and then in parallel in Year 9. Students are given a firm foundation in both languages.

Right from the start but particularly in Year 9 we aim to lay the foundations for the German and French GCSE courses, thus practising the skill of translating to and from the target language (French/German into English and English into French/German) and familiarising students with key concepts of grammar. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the acquisition of a wide range of vocabulary. We also endeavour to study short excerpts of literary texts or poems in the target language.

## Music

Head of Department:	Dr S King
Coordinator of Lower School Academic Music:	Mrs A Price
Staff:	Miss R Aldred
	Mr D Mason
	Mrs S Oliver
	Dr S Murphy
	Miss E Black

Music classwork in the Junior School and in Years 7 and 8 complements the students' instrumental studies.

Practical aural work (singing, rhythmic work and the co-ordinated combination of both) helps to establish a bank of experience from which is extracted the theoretical concepts of intervals, triads, chords, keys, musical form etc.

The reading and writing of music is approached through absolute notation (necessary for instrumental music reading) and through Solfa notation (to assist the development of musical imagination or "inner hearing").

Although the intention is to demonstrate the inseparability of music theory and music practice, it is an aim that students pass the Grade V Theory examination by the end of Year 8, if not earlier.

Improvisation (rhythmic and melodic) is a regular feature of the music lessons, and there are also opportunities for writing and performing composed melodies, rounds and ensemble music.

Students in Years 4-6 sing together in the Junior Choir, while Year 7-8 students have their own choir. Each of these choirs rehearses weekly and there are regular opportunities to perform.

In Year 9 students begin to prepare for the GCSE examination in Music. For most students, the GCSE course formally begins at the start of Year 10 and the exam will be taken at the end of Year 11. However, where a student's potential and previous development suggest that earlier entry would be both successful and profitable in terms of progress, he or she may start the course in Year 9 and be entered at the end of Year 10. This decision will be taken towards the end of Year 8 in consultation with the Director of Music.

Preparation for GCSE builds on work undertaken in previous years, concentrating on listening, composition, and the acquisition of background knowledge of the development of western classical music. An introduction to the music of other cultures and to basic concepts in music technology is included. All these topics are united in a consistent aural approach and, where possible, students are encouraged to enhance classwork with live performances on their instrument.

Staff:

Mr Pete Clark

### **Years 3, 4, 5 and 6**

Students are taught the fundamentals of movement: agility, balance, flexibility, kinaesthetic awareness and coordination through fun games and activities. They follow a developed program to learn a variety of different skills including travel, jumps, rolls, balances and creating sequences on and off apparatus. We offer the opportunity to explore movement through exercise to music. Mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation activities are also introduced. We teach basic ball skills related to hand-ocular coordination as for playing an instrument then introduce striking and fielding games during the summer months.

### **Years 7 and 8**

We start to educate and induct our students about the various components of fitness and the different fitness programs available in accordance with their demands. Students have programs recommended and explained to them and they are given the opportunity to use the gym equipment. This includes cardio-vascular machines, weight resistance machines and free-weights. In addition, we teach fundamental patterns of main strength lift to prepare them for a correct future use of weights in a gym environment. We also introduce groups activities such as Pilates, Yoga, Fit box and Tabata sessions to improve their general wellbeing, mental health, and general fitness in a supervised environment. This is the start of a longer-term aim to equip students with the skills and knowledge of how to start to produce their own fitness programs in the future, based on a solid understanding of their individual needs as a musician. Students will also take part in badminton, cricket, dodgeball, netball, and rounders through the summer months.

We understand the importance of physical activities, especially after the unprecedented time which they needed to overcome the last few years. In line with current research from Sports England, we embrace the benefits of sports in our students' growth.

## Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Head of Department: Mrs S Cox  
Staff: Mr A Kyle  
Mr P Clark

Chetham's PSHE provision follows the PSHE Association's Programme of Study for Key Stage 3, whilst also addressing aspects of Citizenship and Religious Education.

In Years 7-9, all students have one 60-minute lesson per week. The course introduces issues and topics which are of relevance to the lives of all young people at an appropriate level. The topics are revisited in more depth in Key Stage 4.

The main topics covered include:

### Year 7

#### Personal Studies

- Communication skills
- Growing and changing – aspects of puberty
- Healthy eating and exercise
- Bullying including cyber-bullying and abuse
- Safety on the streets

#### Religious Studies

- Exploring Christianity

### Year 8

#### Personal Studies

- Smoking/vaping/alcohol/drugs
- Health
- Relationships and sex
- Finances
- Study skills

#### Religious Studies

- Exploring Islam

### Year 9

#### Personal Studies

- Racism, prejudice and discrimination
- Body image and self-esteem
- Mental wellbeing
- Young people and crime (including online crime and staying safe)
- Media literacy
- Careers

#### Religious Studies

- Exploring Buddhism

\*Topics are revisited as appropriate, the overall aim being to accrue knowledge, skills and understanding that enhance wellbeing and further the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each student.

## Science

Head of Department: Mr A Henderson (Biology)  
Staff: Mr J Blundell (Physics)  
Mr C Davidson (Physics/General Sciences)  
Mrs C Shiells (Chemistry)  
Ms E Storey (Biology/Sciences)

### Key Stage 3

The science curriculum at Chetham's follows closely the National Curriculum at KS3. The department firmly believes that practical work is the core for developing a good understanding of the scientific method and analytical skills and as such practical work is at the heart of all topics at KS3.

### Years 7 and 8

Science is taught by one teacher for two and a half hours per week.

The lessons use a variety of learning styles and wherever possible focus on learning through practical work.

The topics covered are:

#### Biology

Cells and organisation, The skeletal and muscular systems, Nutrition and digestion, Gas exchange systems, Reproduction, Health, Photosynthesis, Cellular respiration, Relationships in an ecosystem and Inheritance, chromosomes, DNA and genes.

#### Chemistry

The particulate nature of matter, Atoms, elements and compounds, Pure and impure substances, Chemical reactions, Energetics, The Periodic Table, Materials and The Earth and its atmosphere.

#### Physics

Energy, Motion and forces, Waves, Electricity and electromagnetism, Matter and Space physics

### Year 9

All Year 9 students will begin to study the AQA GCSE Trilogy Specification at the start of Year 9. Students receive one hour of Biology, Chemistry and Physics a week. A number of practical investigations are carried out in each subject, including some of the twenty-one required practicals on the GCSE course.