



Chetham's

Curriculum Policy

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Chetham's Curriculum Policy

Introduction

Chetham's School of Music provides a specialist curriculum that balances outstanding musical education with high academic achievement. The key concern of the curriculum is to offer breadth, balance and quality within the context of the School's music specialism. We aim to achieve an effective balance of timetabling, staffing and resourcing in pursuit of both exceptional instrumental performance and high academic standards.

This policy outlines the curriculum provision across the Junior School, Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form and describes how academic, musical and personal development opportunities are integrated to support each student's educational journey.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Lower, Middle and Sixth Form Curriculum Handbooks.

Curriculum Principles

The curriculum is designed to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education alongside specialist musical training
- Promote self-motivated and independent learning habits and academic achievement
- Support students in developing their musical potential through individualised programmes
- Foster personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and support wellbeing
- Prepare students for higher education, conservatoire study and future careers
- Promote Fundamental British Values through teaching and learning activities
- Support all learners, including those with additional learning needs, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

Instrumental and Musical Curriculum

Instrumental programmes are tailored, as far as practicalities allow, to the aptitudes and interests of individual students. More than one-third of the School

timetable is devoted to music, and students can expect to study music for more than three hours each day in addition to scheduled practice time

The music curriculum includes:

- Instrumental and vocal study
- Aural training
- Chamber music
- Orchestral training
- Choral work
- Academic music study
- Improvisation
- Jazz
- Composition
- Music technology
- Music therapy

All students have a principal study instrument and usually a second study instrument. Students receive:

- Two individual lessons each week on their principal study instrument
- One individual lesson each week on their second study instrument
- Scheduled individual practice time up to Sixth Form

Junior students follow a curriculum with shorter lessons and regular small-group tuition designed to support progression towards independent learning.

Monitoring and Assessment of Musical Progress

To support student development:

- Students in Years 7, 9 and 11 perform a recital for their Head of Instrumental Department (HoID) and the Joint Principal (TR) in order to review progress and receive guidance and encouragement
- Heads of Instrumental Department visit instrumental lessons annually for technical evaluations and progress discussions involving students and instrumental tutors
- Year 12 students undertake a mock conservatoire audition before an external panel
- Students regularly participate in performance classes, masterclasses and ensembles of varying sizes as part of their musical development.

Academic Curriculum

Details of courses and option choices are published annually in curriculum handbooks for Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form students. These are issued during the Spring Term and are also available on the School website. Student choice increases at key transition points, particularly when entering Years 10 and 12.

Each academic department maintains its own documentation, including:

- Subject aims
- Teaching approaches
- Assessment procedures
- Schemes of work
- Professional review documentation

- Relevant risk assessments

The School actively promotes opportunities for cross-curricular learning, particularly where links can be made between music and wider academic disciplines. The School's provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) is detailed in a separate SMSC document.

Junior School Curriculum (Key Stage 2)

The Junior School curriculum broadly reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2. ICT is taught through subject-based topics, while Music, Modern Foreign Languages and Physical Education are delivered by specialist staff. Close curricular links are maintained between the Junior Department and Year 7.

Where practicable, Year 6 students take part in transition activities including taster lessons in English, Mathematics and Science delivered by Senior School colleagues.

Students with specific educational needs are supported by the Learning Support Department, with whom the Junior School works closely. Students undertake nationally standardised internal assessments in May to inform measures of progress.

Lower School Curriculum (Years 7-9)

The aim of the Lower School curriculum is to promote effective learning habits across a broad and balanced range of subjects. The emphasis is placed on the development of skills rather than simply the coverage of large quantities of content. Students experience a wide variety of subjects before specialising further in later years. Throughout this phase, the balance between academic study and musical development remains central.

Subjects Studied

Students study:

- Music
- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- History
- Geography
- French
- German
- Art
- Drama
- PSHE
- ICT
- Physical Education

The Key Stage 3 curriculum places emphasis on developing subject-specific and transferable skills that support future study and lifelong learning.

Baseline Assessment

All students complete the MidYIS baseline assessment during Years 7, 8 or 9, depending on their entry point to the School. No preparation is required for this assessment.

Middle School Curriculum (Years 10-11)

The School seeks to provide as broad an education as possible until the end of Year 9. However, the increased demands of GCSE study and specialist musical training require students entering Year 10 to make choices regarding the number and range of subjects they study.

Core GCSE Subjects

All students typically study:

- Music
- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Combined Science (Trilogy Double Award)

Exceptions may apply for some EAL students, who may follow a modified GCSE programme.

GCSE Options

Students choose two subjects

- French
- German
- History
- Geography
- Art
- Drama

Option availability may vary according to student demand and School resourcing. Subjects with insufficient uptake may not run. Following discussion between the Head of Instrumental Department and the Head of Middle School, recommendations may be made to ensure an appropriate balance between academic and musical commitments.

Additional Timetabled Provision

In addition to GCSE subjects, all students participate in:

- Timetabled instrumental work and practice: minimum seven hours per week
- Physical Education: one hour per week
- PSHE: one hour per week
- Choir: approximately 30 minutes per week
- Tutor programme and assemblies: one hour per week

Students also have a minimum commitment of seven additional hours for evening practice and Saturday morning activities.

Baseline Assessment

Year 10 students complete the YELLIS baseline assessment during a timetabled academic lesson. No preparation is required.

Sixth Form Curriculum

The Sixth Form curriculum seeks to achieve the right balance between providing a rounded education that prepares students for Higher Education and supporting the demands of the School's music specialism. Students are encouraged to consider their academic strengths, musical commitments and future aspirations when selecting courses.

Students are encouraged to discuss their choices with:

- Parents, carers or guardians
- Subject teachers
- Instrumental teachers
- Heads of Department
- Personal tutors (for existing students)

A-Level Programme: (See Sixth Form Curriculum Handbook)

All students study Music A Level and normally select two additional A Level subjects. In some circumstances students may study one or three additional subjects.

Students are generally expected to choose Music plus two further subjects. Students wishing to study four A-Levels may be permitted to do so where appropriate. Courses are subject to viability based on student numbers and prior attainment and experience.

Study Expectations

Each A-Level subject is allocated five hours of teaching time each week. Students are expected to complete approximately three to four hours of independent study per subject per week in addition to lessons.

Baseline Assessment

All Year 12 students undertake the ALIS baseline assessment during a timetabled academic lesson. No preparation is required.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)

PSHE forms an important part of the School curriculum:

- PSHE is taught weekly in all year groups up to Year 11
- In Year 12, PSHE is delivered fortnightly, with Creative Engagement activities taking place during alternate weeks
- The Tutor Programme and assembly programme reinforce PSHE themes.
- All students participate in choir on a weekly or fortnightly basis

- Year 9 students participate in an Enrichment Programme incorporating thinking skills, study skills and careers awareness.

Creative Engagement and Outreach

All students, particularly those following two A Levels, are encouraged to participate in the wider skills curriculum through Creative Engagement. This provision enables students to engage with outreach activities and additional music-related projects.

Creative Engagement complements A Level study and helps students develop skills valued by universities, colleges and employers.

ICT Provision

ICT is taught as a discrete subject in Years 7 and 8, focusing on the skills and understanding required for the modern technological world. In later years, ICT skills are delivered and reinforced through curriculum subjects. All students use Music Technology as part of their composition studies in Music.

Learning Support and Inclusion

The Learning Support Department supports:

- Students with identified additional learning needs
- Students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL)

Support may be provided through:

- Individual lessons
- Small-group teaching
- In-class support

The School is committed to ensuring that all students can access and benefit fully from the curriculum.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure that the curriculum continues to meet the needs of students, and cultivates independent, self-motivated learning which reflects the School's specialist music provision and high standards of academic achievement and personal development.