



Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation



At DCSF Chorister school, we recognise the importance of providing tailored support for all children. A holistic, well-rounded approach to education allows us to cater to the intellectual, creative, and physical abilities of all our children with a knowledge and skills-based curriculum that centres around creativity and thinking skills. Using an internal robust assessment system and teacher observations, we identify where each child is currently at in their learning journey and the stage of support best suited to them. The three categories of support we use are Support and Reinforce, Strengthen and Build, and Stretch and Challenge. This approach allows us to create individualised programs that enhance each child's educational experience.

Our commitment to differentiation and quality first teaching is a cornerstone of our academic provision and our teachers have the skills and experience to employ a variety of strategies according to the needs of each child. For instance, those identified under the Support and Reinforce category might receive targeted practice to solidify foundational skills. Students at the Strengthen and Build stage might be provided with additional advanced challenges, while those in the Stretch and Challenge group might tackle additional open-ended activities. All of this is provided in a way that means no child will miss out on opportunities and, through this differentiation, we ensure that every child remains engaged and motivated, fostering a lifelong love for learning.

We also value collaborative learning experiences and have established groups and clubs that allow the children to interact with peers who share similar interests. By matching children according to their level of support, we can create dynamic opportunities for joint workshops, masterclasses, and projects that emphasise teamwork and higher-order thinking skills. Additionally, we regularly invite a diverse range of expert practitioners and guest speakers to deliver specialised assemblies and activities, providing our children with real-world insights that further ignite their passions and curiosity.

We also recognise that the children will each have talents that reach beyond the classroom, and we offer a variety of enrichment activities designed to further enhance their educational experience. Examples would be in sport, where we have teams, fixtures and clubs that promote teamwork, physical fitness and fair competition. Children who are interested in music can participate in band, choirs, and individual instrument lessons, alongside the privilege of singing and performing in Durham Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We also have other enrichment programs available at different times in the year such as public speaking, coding and Art clubs, and a Science Fair which all encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Parental involvement is fundamental to the success of our enrichment provisions. We actively engage parents in discussions about their child's strengths and areas for growth, fostering a holistic approach that extends beyond the classroom. Our talks and evenings for parents provide valuable insights on nurturing their child's potential at home, as well as understanding their pastoral needs. By building strong partnerships between home and school, we create an environment where all of the children feel valued and understood, leading to enhanced academic outcomes and personal growth.

Ongoing assessment and evaluation of our support programs are critical to maintaining their effectiveness and relevance. We employ a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to review the progress of all of the children, ensuring that our provision continues to meet their evolving needs. Feedback from children, staff and parents, alongside performance in lessons and standardised assessments, informs our continuous refinement of strategies and resources. By consistently evaluating our stages of support — Support and Reinforce, Strengthen and Build, and Stretch and Challenge—we maintain a dynamic educational environment that nurtures the unique potential of each child, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities in their academic journey at DCSF Chorister School.