



Prospectus

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, which provides an outstanding, inspiring and values-driven education for 3 to 18-year-old girls and boys.



I am honoured and delighted to be Principal of this newly formed Foundation, which brings together Durham School and The Chorister School – two extraordinary educational institutions, steeped in more than 600 years of history in the magnificent city of Durham.

This union gives us a unique opportunity to create a new, exciting, vibrant, and inclusive school community which combines the very best of both schools; their traditions, philosophies, successes and ambitions, enabling us to deliver the best all-round education possible.

The word Foundation in our new name is apt – our foundations in the city are immensely strong and the school will continue to be the foundation for future generations of young men and women as they take their place in a fast-moving world, empowered with *Confidence for Life*.

At DCSF we offer an inspiring environment across three historic city centre sites where a diverse student population thrives and are given every opportunity to realise their individual potential. Our values – Moral Integrity, Ambition, Responsibility, and Kindness are the MARK of a DCSF education.

We believe in educating the whole person in the broadest sense and while academic life and achievement are at the heart of what we do, we are also proud to encourage and support all pupils to explore and experience a wide range of activities across sporting, artistic and charitable endeavours.

We want our pupils to leave us as confident, happy and fully-rounded individuals with a thirst for life and learning, and ready to make a positive contribution to society. In this regard, one of the things I'm perhaps most proud of is our holistic pastoral provision, which was recognised in 2021 by the Wellbeing in Schools Award.

While we hope this prospectus captures the progressive spirit, values and quality of our school, we are always keen to welcome you to experience life at Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation in its stunning World Heritage Site location first hand. Please do get in touch and arrange a call or a visit, we would love to meet you and your family.

Mr K J McLaughlin
Principal



At Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, we are ambitious for pupils, staff and wider school community.

Overview

The Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation was established in 2021 following the merger of Durham School and The Chorister School – two prestigious institutions which have educated children from Durham and beyond for more than 600 years.

We offer an independent day and boarding educational journey in the North East of England for children from 3–18. Our schools are tailored to reflect the needs of each age group and underpinned by our consistent values and commitment to see each child as an individual with unique skills, talents and potential.

With our highly talented and dedicated team of inspiring teachers, we aim to make learning exciting and stimulating for all our pupils and we pride ourselves on the quality of our academic teaching. This is borne out by our proud record of academic excellence and achievement.

We believe young people learn as much about themselves through what they do outside the classroom, and the Foundation offers a huge variety of co-curricular activities. Music and drama play an integral role in everyday school

life, particularly for our internationally renowned Durham Cathedral Choristers. We also enjoy a richly deserved reputation for sporting excellence, with many of our alumni going on to compete at the highest levels.

DCSF is privileged to welcome pupils from all over the world. We currently have students from more than 20 countries, and we greatly value the richness and diversity they bring to our community.

The School is fully co-educational and operates across three sites, all located centrally in the historic city of Durham close to the University and Cathedral. For day or boarding pupils we offer the best of both worlds: an exciting academic city, as well as room to breathe outdoors.

Strong Ethos

At Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, we strive to combine the best traditions of a truly independent school steeped in centuries of history with the most modern and progressive teaching methods and practices to deliver academic excellence and personal growth.

We are immensely proud of our pupils, not only for their impressive academic achievements, but also for their kindness and consideration, their generosity of spirit and respect for others. We strive to engender a passion for learning in all our children, as well as the curiosity to seek new challenges and the pursuit of excellence in all that they do.

All our staff are dedicated to the various roles they play, enabling children to grow in confidence and security, and to develop those skills necessary for success in life. Our inspiring teachers take great pride in getting to know and care about every child as an individual, and are empowered to deliver a rich, expansive and exciting curriculum in small class sizes.



Our excellent pastoral provision and House system provide a safe and supportive family network for students and ensure they are never lost in the crowd. Students are encouraged to take leadership roles and responsibilities that will help prepare them to make a meaningful contribution to society after they leave us.

Above all we are committed to being one Foundation, where pupils can benefit from our strong values and ideology and enjoy a seamless and continuous journey from the ages of 3 to 18.

The Foundation MARK

We believe our pupils carry the MARK of the Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation long after they leave.

The fundamental principles of Moral integrity, Ambition, Responsibility and Kindness underpin everything we do across the Foundation and are the core values we use to shape the children that we are entrusted with into happy, confident and productive young adults who will go on to make their own MARK on the world.

We firmly believe providing teaching that has its foundation in these values will develop happy, mature, assured, and responsible young people who are better placed to succeed in life as well as in their academic exams, and that by doing so we can provide an education that lasts a lifetime.



Moral Integrity

- We have the courage to say and do the right thing
- We demonstrate a will to do the right thing
- We can be relied upon to do the right thing
- We act in private as we do in public
- We stand firm for what is right
- We challenge things we think wrong and are open to challenge from others
- We are accountable for failure as well as success, and do not allocate blame
- We demonstrate and promote honesty, and are true to ourselves

Responsibility

- We do what we say we will
- We are punctual and prompt in all that we do
- We use our resources responsibly, developing and caring for our environment
- We act before being asked and consistently deliver on expectations
- We prepare thoroughly for all tasks
- We are accountable for our actions
- We encourage autonomy in all and seek leadership
- We acknowledge and seek to resolve problems
- We pioneer better ways of doing things

Ambition

- We achieve our goals by consistently working toward them
- We go above and beyond the call of duty
- We're ambitious when we set goals for ourselves
- We seek help and support before giving up and identify lessons in setbacks
- We encourage all to develop maximum potential and support others to achieve
 - We embrace opportunities, challenge, and seek to develop our skills and talents
 - We identify opportunities for school development

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Kindness

- We are open and approachable to all, no matter their gender, faith, race or background
 - We welcome and listen to the opinions of others and look to engage and involve a diverse range of views in the community
- We attend to and include newcomers and those needing help, and actively build relationships
- We support each other and stand up for fellow colleagues and pupils
- We acknowledge individual needs within our diverse and inclusive community
- We speak positively of the DCSF community, and are positive in responding to questions



Our school
Motto is
*Confidence
for Life and
Respect for All.*

Old Dunelmians, as former students are known, have gone on to achieve great things after leaving us. From Prime Ministers to Police Chief Constables, composers to comedians, our pupils have succeeded in all areas of life.

Our alumni have won Olympic medals and represented England with distinction in cricket, football and rugby, while others have become household names in broadcasting, writing and acting. Many more have made distinguished and valued contributions to society as judges, scholars, physicians and politicians.

Over our long and prestigious history, we have consistently been successful in securing places for our students at the finest universities in the world, and we regularly guide and support sixth formers with ambitions to go to Oxbridge through the lengthy and challenging application processes.

An education at Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation opens doors, offering all our students a wealth of opportunities to make the most of their potential, as well as the confidence to take them wherever they wish to go. We firmly believe the ultimate ambition for any school, and indeed parent, should be to produce great citizens capable of being anything they put their minds to.

The three pillars of DCSF which support this are:

Academic challenge which gives students a lifelong appetite for learning.

Pastoral care to provide our students with emotional, moral and spiritual strength.

Co-curricular opportunities which enrich and develop the individual, and foster leadership, collaboration and teamwork.



Academic Excellence

Whether your child starts their educational journey with us aged three, or arrives for the first time in Sixth Form, DCSF offers a first-class all-round education. The broad, participative and balanced curriculum is carefully structured and expertly delivered to ensure every pupil can achieve their full potential.

Our excellent GCSE and A Level results are an annual source of celebration for students and teachers. We work continuously to monitor and tailor our educational programme to offer pupils every opportunity to thrive and achieve their personal best.



Early Years to Year 6

Children in our Prep School – Chorister School – enjoy two spectacular sites with space aplenty to indulge in learning and play that are integral to their development.

EYFS to Year 2 are based at our Bow site where the playing fields and woodland entice eager young minds to explore and learn. Our dedicated EYFS centre is focused on developing the building blocks of learning that shape a child's onward journey all the way to the Senior School.

Years 3 to 6 are located at our Cathedral site where the majesty of the World Heritage Site is their domain. They enjoy opportunities to grow personally, emotionally and academically ahead of their onward journey to the Senior School.

The academic drive of the school is essential and sits across everything we do. We offer a broad curriculum that caters for pupils' individual needs and encourages a love of learning. Our curriculum offers the opportunity for every child to shine and reach their potential. A blend of traditional and forward-thinking teaching approaches ensure our children are well equipped for their educational journey,

We believe a happy child is a learning child and our creative, holistic approach ensures emotional and social stability is of the utmost importance.

Having social and emotional foundations in place supports academic success as the children move forward in their educational journey.



Senior School – Years 7–11

With a highly talented and dedicated team of teachers who are passionate about their subjects, we aim to make learning exciting and stimulating for all of our pupils and we pride ourselves on the quality of our academic teaching.

Life at Senior School is all about inspiring minds, igniting the love of learning and creating building blocks for academic endeavour.

Our philosophy revolves around empowering our pupils and helping them achieve their best with lessons designed to encourage students to think critically, evaluate and reflect.

The GCSE programme aims to build on the foundations laid down in earlier years. The choice of subjects is wide and the curriculum structure is designed to allow pupils to opt for either breadth or greater specialism. The courses normally lead to 9 or 10 GCSEs; a sound platform for more specialist study at A Level and BTEC.

The Durham School 1 Year GCSE programme provides international pupils, for whom English is their second language, with a one-year course designed to prepare them for the demand of A Levels.

By providing a core curriculum of GCSEs alongside intensive English Language lessons, the course places pupils in a strong position to gain full entry to Durham School's A Level programme.



**"51.8% grades
7–9 at GCSE in
2024."**



Sixth Form

The Sixth Form at DCSF is based on a traditional academic model of a broad A Level curriculum with the opportunity for pupils who are looking for a more vocational course to achieve a Level 3 BTEC National Diploma in Business.

While academic success is our core purpose, within our co-educational day and boarding community our pupils receive a multitude of opportunities to gain Confidence for Life. Students are empowered to become independent and responsible learners and encouraged to think for themselves as they approach the next stage of their academic lives.

After achieving A Level success, the vast majority of our pupils move onto higher education, either in the UK or overseas.

International students can benefit from a three-year Sixth Form course; the first year being an introduction to Sixth Form, designed for pupils for whom English is a second language.



"83.8% A* – C
at A Level in
2024."

Opportunity

From the very beginning of their journey with us, pupils are strongly encouraged to explore and develop a wide range of interests outside of the classroom and we provide a wealth of exciting and inclusive opportunities to do so through the many clubs and societies that exist at the school.

We firmly believe that these co-curricular activities play a key role in ensuring that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens throughout their education and beyond.



Sport

At DCSF we view sport as a vital ingredient in contributing to the development of confident, healthy, well-rounded individuals and we pride ourselves on offering a broad range of sports and activities.

The Foundation has a long and proud history of sporting excellence with our school teams regularly competing at regional and national levels. Our prestigious Rowing and Rugby clubs are amongst the oldest in the world.

All DCSF pupils participate in a minimum of 4 x 55 minutes of sport and physical activity per week. Our sports provision embraces 'Excellence' and 'Sport for All' and we encourage all our pupils to participate at the level which suits them. Swimming, Basketball, Badminton, Tennis, Athletics, Aerobics and Dance are among the many options in addition to our main sports of Cricket, Hockey, Netball, Rowing, and Rugby.



Music

Music enjoys an enviable reputation both within the Foundation and further afield for its standard of excellence. Durham Cathedral Choir choristers are educated within the Foundation and contribute to the musical life of the schools as well as the Cathedral, but music is open for all to enjoy, and a huge variety of musical tastes and opportunities are catered for.

School musicians have performed frequently at prestigious venues such as The Glasshouse, Gateshead and the Gala Theatre in Durham, and are supported by dedicated and energetic staff, including 20 visiting music teachers offering tuition on any musical instrument. Scholarships are available for suitably talented pupils.



Drama

Our lively and ambitious Drama department in Durham School runs from its own fully functioning theatre, The Luce, where many GCSE, A Level and whole school productions take place, often with the student technical and production team providing the lighting and sound.

Our biggest and best productions also go on the road to professional venues in the region including Durham's Gala Theatre and the Tyne Theatre in Newcastle.

All pupils study drama at KS3 and develop their performance skills. For students with a keen interest, Drama is offered both at GCSE and A Level. The facilities and support offered at DCSF allows pupils to pursue their interests in acting, technical design or even directing.

Drama and public speaking feature strongly at Chorister School to inspire pupils to be confident, articulate and imaginative, while gaining life-long skills and enjoying the pleasures of self-expression.





Cathedral Choristers

Durham Cathedral Choir consists of up to 24 girl Choristers and 24 boy choristers who sing separately alongside the ladies and gentlemen of the Choir. Choristers typically join the Choir between the ages of 8 and 10, and remain until the age of 13.

Choristers receive a first-class musical education and experience performing to the highest of standards in one of the most loved and revered buildings in Britain – and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The majority of the Choir’s singing takes place during the daily worship of Durham Cathedral, however, the Choir also takes part in concerts, recordings, live broadcasts on the radio and television, and international tours.

The Choristers are educated as day pupils or boarding pupils at DCSF, and are fully integrated members of the Foundation. School fees are part-funded by the Cathedral

through a Choral Scholarship and further means-tested bursaries are also available to ensure the opportunity to become a Chorister is open to children from all backgrounds.

As well as a full academic curriculum, Choristers receive free music theory and piano lessons, and also learn a second, and even third, instrument.

In addition to their musical and academic commitments, Choristers play a full part in the life of the Foundation. The timetable enables them to compete in sports matches, perform in drama productions and join other co-curricular activities.

We hold regular Chorister Experience events, when children in school Years 2 to 5 sing alongside the Cathedral Choristers and find out about their life in Durham.





Diversity

Diversity is celebrated at DCSF, where a dynamic mix of pupils and staff is encouraged in all aspects of Foundation life. Our Houses, sports teams and classrooms all benefit from the range of characters and backgrounds that coexist in harmony and combine to allow all pupils to contribute and thrive.

The Foundation is proud to welcome pupils from all backgrounds; from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom as well as from all over the world. Currently, we have more than 70 international pupils from 20 different countries, and we greatly value the richness and the diversity that all pupils bring to our school community.

Living and learning in a different country can be a daunting experience but we find our international pupils quickly settle into life at

DCSF. This is thanks to the friendliness of the community as a whole and of the boarding Houses in particular; the helpfulness of our boarding staff and the support of our excellent English as an Additional Language Department (EAL), whose input goes well beyond the mere teaching of English.

We also offer a 1 Year GCSE programme, which provides international pupils, for whom English is their second language, with a one-year course designed to prepare them for the demand of A Levels. Even though it is a one-year stand-alone course, enrolled pupils are welcomed as full members of the Durham School community and will be expected to participate in all aspects of boarding life including our extensive sporting and co-curricular opportunities.





Boarding

Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation is home to two traditional British boarding schools, providing a warm and supportive environment for our wonderfully diverse community.

Boarders and day pupils mix in Houses, lessons, activities, games, and social activities. Boarding encourages pupils to take full advantage of everything that the Foundation and City have to offer, living their lives to the full as part of a community designed to allow individuals to flourish while living and learning together.

Our pastoral provision is a great source of pride and was recognised in 2021 by the Wellbeing in Schools Award.

There are four boarding Houses – three on the Senior site and a boarding house at Chorister School – with separate Houses allocated for boys and girls from ages 11 to 18.

Each House is run by an experienced and dedicated team of Housemasters/mistresses, Tutors and Matrons. The Houses are at the heart of pupils' lives, and all boarders will experience a kind and communal atmosphere, which will help them develop into confident and independent young adults.

Boarders at the Foundation fall into three categories: Full Boarders, Weekly Boarders and Occasional Boarders. For full boarders the Foundation ensures that there is always a diverse range of exciting and engaging events at the weekend, and evenings provide a more relaxed atmosphere with film nights, joint House BBQs and socials.



Bursaries and Scholarships

King's Scholarship

King's Scholarships are available to pupils entering Year 7 and Year 9 who demonstrate excellence in Mathematics and English, and are worth £1,000 off school fees with additional financial support available based on the applicant's financial means.

Burkitt Scholarship

For students entering sixth form, **Burkitt Scholarships** provide financial support to students able to demonstrate excellence in Mathematics, English and critical thinking, with further financial support available to those that gain entry to Oxford or Cambridge Universities.

The Governing Body of the Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation is committed to widening access to the benefits of a Foundation education through the provision of financial assistance with fees.

In addition to the Academic Scholarships listed above, the Foundation also offers a limited number of awards at 11+, 13+ and 16+ in a range of other disciplines. These prestigious awards provide financial assistance, and in addition Music Scholarships offer free music tuition on two instruments (voice included).

Pupils in receipt of Art, Design Technology, Drama and Music awards are expected to continue their studies in those disciplines to GCSE, and in sport to play an active role in the games programmes and fixture list.

If required, financial assistance in the form of a Governors' Bursary may be available at any point in your child's school career, including on admission. This is discretionary and is granted only after the assessment of parents' financial circumstances.



Start your journey today...

This prospectus gives a snapshot of life at Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation. We would love for you and your family to come and experience it together first hand.

We invite all interested parents to visit the Principal or Headmistress to discuss your child's education, see the facilities and take a full tour of our historic sites. In addition, we also offer the following opportunities:

Taster Days

Prospective pupils are warmly invited to join us for a Taster Day, where they will join a House and a year group for the day (Year 7 in the case of those wishing to join us in Year 7) and can expect to attend all lessons and other activities held on that particular day. Children will be escorted at every minute of the day by hand-picked guides and our staff will keep a friendly and watchful eye open for them.

We have offered Taster Days for a number of years and the overwhelming majority of girls and boys who have availed themselves of the opportunity cannot wait to join us full time!

In the case of a prospective boarder, a Taster Day can also involve an overnight stay, subject to there being space available.

Open Events

We periodically open our doors to the world for parents and children to see the Foundation in action, with a wide range of activities and presentations run by our teachers, staff and of course pupils – the real stars of the show.

Contact details:

For all enquiries regarding visits, tasters, scholarships and bursaries, **please contact:**

e: admissions@dcfsf.org.uk
e: prep-admissions@dcfsf.org.uk

t: 0191 731 9270



How to find us

Durham is conveniently located within easy reach of local airports at Newcastle and Durham Teesside, Durham Station (East Coast main line), the A1M linking Newcastle and the North with Darlington, York, and the South and the A19. Durham School is situated close to the city centre with the Bow site just a half a mile down the road. The Chorister site is situated in the shadow of Durham Cathedral up the road from the city centre.

- **Edinburgh**

Direct rail link – 2 Hours

- **Newcastle airport**

30 Mins by car or Rail

- **Manchester**

Airport 2 hours by rail

- **London**

3 Hours by rail (direct line) services to Heathrow

Using Sat Nav, postcodes are:

Durham School DH1 4SZ

Bow site DH1 3LS

Cathedral site DH1 3EL



Get in touch:

admissions@dcfs.org.uk

www.dcsf.org.uk

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