Chetham's

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Teaching and Learning Policy

Aims and Ethos

This policy establishes our shared principles and expectations for high-quality teaching and learning. Its purpose is to ensure that every student experiences an ambitious, inclusive and coherent education that enables them to know more, remember more, understand more and increasingly apply their learning independently.

This policy aims to set out how we create an environment where students learn best. Without wanting to be prescriptive or restrictive, we aim to make sure everyone is committed to achieving a consistent approach to teaching and learning and we recognise that the special context of Chetham's as a specialist music school will inform our practice.

Students learn best when they feel secure, safe and valued and all our work both in and outside the classroom fosters that. Our behaviour model is restorative with an emphasis on making the consequence address the lapse in learning.

Teaching and learning at Chetham's is based around the following core principles:

- **Ambition**: all students experience a challenging curriculum and high expectations.
- **Creativity**: the ability to generate new ideas, create original things, and explore different ways of thinking and solving problems is an important aspect of teaching and learning at Chetham's, both musically and in an academic context. Students are encouraged to use their imagination, express themselves, and develop new skills through experimentation and discovery
- **Engagement**: students are ready to learn, arrive on time, are 'active' learners throughout the lesson, and respect other students' right to learn
- **Thinking**: students are expected to think hard rather than merely complete tasks
- **Knowledge**: teaching builds secure, connected knowledge over time using cognitive devices such as retrieval, spacing, and interleaving.
- **Inclusion**: teachers anticipate barriers and adapt teaching through scaffolding techniques so all students can participate and succeed
- **Responsiveness**: low-stakes formative assessment is used to identify what students understand and informs what happens next
- **Relationships**: through one-to-one and small class / group teaching we can develop positive relationships between staff and students, and in turn create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where students feel valued, respected and confident to learn.

- **Independence**: teaching moves students towards increasingly fluent and independent study as they recognise and adopt self-regulation and metacognition strategies which work for them. This is particularly evident in instrumental studies where students are on highly individualised paths
- **Professionalism**: teaching is informed by evidence (baseline data, and formative and summative assessments, information provided by Learning Support), subject expertise, reflection, collaborative professional learning with Departments, and whole school INSET.

Roles and Responsibilities

The policy applies to all teaching staff and those supporting learning. It establishes common principles while recognising that effective teaching will look different according to subject, phase, curriculum content and students' needs:

- **Tutor**: student workload and wellbeing
- **Heads of Section**: curriculum balance for student relative to their instrumental goals and progress as well as overseeing workload and wellbeing
- **Pastoral Team**: support learning, offer quiet space, work with Heads of Section to indicate any concerns or issues which might impede learning
- **Curriculum Group**: (NS, JH, PC, AK) oversight of the academic curriculum.
- **Students**: should adhere to our behaviour principles (see the *Behaviour Policy*) as they apply to learning, especially Ready and Respect, taking responsibility for their own learning and respecting the rights of others to learn
- **Academic Teachers**: the delivery of high-quality lessons based around effective, evidence-based teaching and learning strategies (e.g. retrieval, spacing) and adaptive teaching
- **Instrumental Tutors**: the principles of 'Sign, Sing, Share' inform the teaching of individuals and ensembles
- **Heads of Department**: Quality assurance (appraisal, lesson observations, work scrutiny), SoWs, student interventions
- **Learning Support**: External support (one-to-one and small groups), TAs, Access Arrangements, diagnostic assessments
- **Parents and Carers**: support all aspects of their child's learning through good attendance and understanding our behaviour policy and procedures. Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment e.g. parent-teacher meetings.

A Framework for Teaching and Learning

Effective teaching needs to be adaptive and organised around expectations and teaching processes rather than following a mandatory lesson format or teaching model. That said, a framework for effective teaching in the classroom would include:

- **Activate and connect prior knowledge**: use retrieval, questioning, recap and deliberate revisiting where these serve the learning
- **Explain and model**: make new learning accessible through clear aims and explanation, carefully chosen examples, modelling, scaffolding, prompts, analogies and worked examples, recognising subject-specific differences
- **Question and check for understanding**: primarily through formative assessment, gather information about students' understanding to decide whether to proceed, reteach, explain differently or provide further practice
- **Independent practice and application**: provide sufficient opportunities for students to practise, consolidate, solve problems, write, apply learning in unfamiliar contexts, and make increasingly independent decisions

- **Review and revisit**: plan opportunities to revisit important learning over increasing intervals so that knowledge becomes secure and usable.

Support is also required for students who miss academic lessons due to instrumental commitments. It is recognised that much of this will happen informally outside lessons as well as in them, but students must also take responsibility for their own learning and be proactive in seeking help and catching up notes. Support also requires good communication between all areas of the School, (academic, instrumental and pastoral), to ensure curriculum balance is maintained.

'Sign, Sing, Share' is Chetham's model of musicianship. It connects the skills and faculties required to be a versatile musician and facilitates learning around that. It requires active, embodied learning, connecting theory to practice, the inner ear to motor skills, academic enquiry to interpretative practice, and cognitive to affective domains. It is also about creating a conceptual map for the students of musical genres and helping them enjoy the overlap in their thinking, e.g., between jazz and classical harmonic approaches. A sign, sing, share intervention could be as short as a few minutes, or it could extend into a whole lesson design and can be used in all musical contexts.

Sign and Sing is about embodying sound, taking an abstract sonic idea in the inner ear and making it concrete. The key message here, as in the Kodály method, is to sign and sing at the same time. They belong together, not one after each other. The 'sign' part is about incorporating the body and movement. The 'sing' aspect could be the vocalisation of rhythms accompanied by body percussion or other 'signing' variants, or the singing of scales, modes, progression while conducting along or moving in the space. The invitation is then to 'share' in the thinking behind a piece of music, whether aural or on the page and for the student and teacher to share their creative response to it.

Curriculum and Planning

Teachers should understand the curriculum as a sequence rather than a series of isolated lessons. Planning should identify important knowledge, connect new material with prior learning, anticipate misconceptions, select appropriate examples and representations, and plan how understanding will be checked.

Student should also have clarity and should understand that learning does not just happen within a lesson but across a sequence of them. For example, sharing the KS2 and KS3 Key Construct overview documents with students (and parents) provides them with a 'road map' for progression within subjects.

Adaptive and Inclusive Teaching

Adaptive teaching is about uncovering learning, not just covering content. We don't know what we don't know, until students show us. Through checking for understanding and using feedback well, teachers can adapt in the moment to maximise learning.

The twin pillars of adaptive teaching (formative assessment and scaffolding) are proven to be the most effective approaches to high-quality inclusive teaching. Scaffolding gives students a sense of mastery and allows them to take risks. Formative assessment can help recalibrate the scaffolding to support and extend understanding.

Scaffolding must be anchored to clear learning intentions. Formative assessment (hinge questions, questioning, exit cards / tickets) should gather evidence from as many learners as is reasonably possible, not just those who offer answers.

Scaffolding works by reducing cognitive load, allowing memory to be freed up for students to think (germane load) about the task or concept (intrinsic load). There are many types of scaffolds:

- **visual** e.g. task planners
- **verbal** e.g. guided tasks, questioning, worked examples, correcting misconceptions
- **written** e.g. word banks and writing frames

but all follow the same principles in their design:

- refresh prior learning
- consolidate new learning with help
- enable students to start or continue a task providing 'enough support so that students can successfully complete tasks that they could not yet do independently' (EEF)
- scaffolding is temporary and an important step towards student independence and mastery of the next challenge they face.

Scaffolding and formative assessment is part of pedogeological practice which teachers use instinctively to facilitate learning. Adaptive teaching is not differentiation; it does not require teachers to create different worksheets for students with different needs.

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning. The effective use formative and summative assessment should facilitate the long-term retention of knowledge and skills and enable learners to move forward.

Assessment is not confined to written work, as much on-going assessment occurs in oral work, listening tasks, practical work, improvisation, group work, etc. While we record and report on student progress through the marking and grading of summative assessment, teachers should be aware that not all work needs to be graded. There is an expectation to mark tests and prep, but classwork does not need to be marked. Indeed, low-stakes formative assessment is far more valuable in the classroom than post-lesson book marking as it allows an instant response to learners' needs, providing the opportunity to scaffold learning and remove misconception on the fly. The purpose of feedback is to improve subsequent learning rather than demonstrate that feedback has been given.

Colleagues should embrace comment only feedback, particularly at KS2 and KS3 for prep tasks. Comments with appropriate targets or actions encourage students to see how they can move forward. Graded work, even if accompanied with comments, is proven to be less effective, with students focusing on the outcome, not the feedback.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

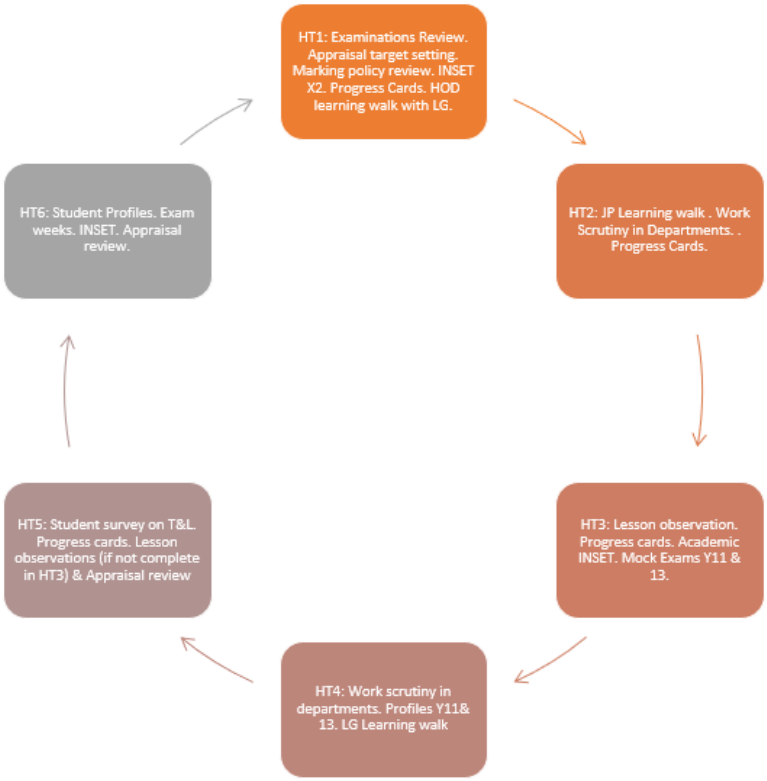
The School is committed to providing high-quality teaching and learning experiences that enable all students to achieve their full potential. Quality assurance is an ongoing process designed to identify strengths, share effective practice, and identify areas for improvement. It is intended to promote professional development, reflection, and continuous improvement across the School.

The quality of teaching and learning will be evaluated through a range of activities, including learning walks, lesson observations, exam revies, staff appraisal, work scrutiny, student discussions / surveys, assessment information, and analysis of student

progress. Leaders will use the outcomes of quality assurance to identify priorities for school improvement, inform staff development, and ensure that teaching strategies meet the needs of all learners.

All staff share responsibility for maintaining high expectations and contributing to a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Chetham's Quality Assurance Programme



Oracy

The importance of oracy is increasingly being acknowledged but we also recognise the special place that skills in spoken communication might hold for young musicians who need to present themselves and their performances. Good participation in academic lessons for example is frequently recognised. In music blocks and performance classes, students are encouraged to practise and refine their presentation skills. Skills in spoken English can be recognised if the student chooses through participation in the spoken component of the English Language GCSE.

Literacy

Literacy is the basis for success in all written examinations, whether in terms of comprehension or clear and effective written expression. Our commitment to the development of literacy is set out in our literacy policy.

Numeracy

The development of students' numeracy skills is a shared responsibility across all curriculum areas. Where appropriate, teachers should provide meaningful opportunities

for students to develop, practise and apply mathematical skills in a range of contexts. Staff should promote the accurate use of mathematical language, encourage students to explain their reasoning and provide opportunities to interpret numerical information, estimate, calculate, measure and solve problems where appropriate to the subject. Teachers should make links between mathematical concepts and real-life applications to develop studetns' confidence, independence and ability to apply their learning beyond the mathematics classroom.

Learning Support and Teaching Assistants

The School aims to ensure that all students have access to inclusive, high-quality teaching and appropriate learning opportunities, irrespective of their individual starting points, abilities or additional needs. There are high expectations of all students, including those with SEND.

Teachers are responsible for planning lessons that take account of the diverse needs of students within their classes. This includes the use of adaptive teaching strategies and regular communication with the Learning Support Department re the needs of supported students. Where appropriate learning Support will offer students specific one-to-one support or additional small group teaching e.g. EAL students.

The Learning Support Department provides student-specific feedback and advice, help with identifying and supporting need in students raised as a potential concern by colleagues, parents or student self-referral, and guidance on how best to deploy TAs, as well as facilitating appropriate Access Arrangements. Learning Support is pro-active in their analysis of the baseline feedback test scores (MidYis, Yellis, and Alis), cross-referencing it with existing knowledge of students.

Student progress wis monitored regularly and support will be reviewed to ensure that it remains appropriate and enables students to develop confidence, make progress, and become increasingly independent learners.

Teaching assistants can make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning by supporting students' engagement, understanding, and progress. Teaching assistants should complement high-quality teaching rather than replace the teacher's input (EEF – 'Deployment of Teaching Assistants' (March 2025)).

TAs are shown to be most effective in the classroom when they are appropriately briefed about lesson objectives or intended learning outcomes. Teaching assistants may work with individuals, small groups or the wider class, depending on the learning objectives and identified needs. Their support should reinforce teacher instruction, address misconceptions, encourage participation and provide opportunities for students to practise and apply their learning.

As with teaching colleagues, teaching assistants should use adaptive teaching strategies such as effective questioning, modelling, prompts and scaffolding to help students overcome barriers to learning. Support should be adapted and gradually reduced where appropriate to encourage independence.

Teachers retain responsibility for the progress and learning of all students in their classes. Regular communication between teachers and teaching assistants should ensure that student progress, emerging difficulties, and successful strategies are shared and used to inform future planning.

Prep and Independent Learning

Independent study is set through the School's prep timetable. The purpose of prep can be to prepare for the next lesson and / or tasks which consolidate and extend classroom learning. Students are supported in their self-study via the Houses who have set prep times, Dept and Section support sessions for individuals or groups, and dedicated study skill sessions e.g. all Y9 students take part in a 10 week Learning to Learn course which focuses encoding strategies, and metacognition and self-regulation.

Behaviour for Learning

As set out in our *Good Behaviour Manual*, we believe that developing positive learning behaviours is essential to academic success and musical excellence. We create calm, predictable and purposeful learning environments through:

- clear expectations and routines
- consistent teaching approaches
- modelling positive behaviour
- clear explanations of rules and routines
- positive reinforcement and praise
- consideration of environmental factors such as noise, lighting and room layout.

We have the facility in our dynamic timetabling, StREAM, to track homework set, students' progress in that and their punctuality to lessons. Additionally, RECON, our system for recording behaviour, positive and less positive, tracks carefully students' relationship with their learning and progress. A student's tutor is a source of support and encouragement and the Head of Section will be responsible for monitoring a student's progress. Each department will take measures to support a student who is working below their target, whether through offering extra sessions to help a student catch up after absence or by putting the student in a compulsory extra study sessions or detention.

Professional Development

Whole School INSET is scheduled 4 times per year, with 2 days dedicated to it at the start of term, a day at the beginning of the October Music Course, the February Music Course, and Summer Music Course. Ongoing INSET will happen within Departments throughout the year, for example, attendance at conferences, exam board meetings, NW HMC subject meetings, and as part of the appraisal system. In addition, INSET will be delivered throughout the year in other forums such as Staff Meetings. Recent INSETS have focused on:

- Well-being
- AI
- Learning to Learn
- KS2 / KS3 Curriculum and Assessment (Key Constructs)
- Behaviour and ReCon.

The current focus of INSET is adaptive teaching.

Related Policies

- *Assessment, Recording and Reporting*
- *Literacy Policy*
- *Good Behaviour Manual*

Appendix 1

Lesson Context Form

Subject	Period:	Date:
NC Year:	Ability (e.g. set, foundation, higher, mixed):	
Number in class:	Female / Male:	SEND / EAL:

1. **Lesson Focus (Aims)**

2. **Context:** Prior learning and links to future lessons / topics.
   Where appropriate, links to PSHE, FBV, SMSC.

3. **Required Adaptations and T&L Strategies:** For example, seating, different paper / overlays, TA use; scaffolding and formative assessment strategies.