

Westminster Abbey
Choir School





Westminster Abbey is one of the most famous churches in the world. For over a thousand years music has been an integral part of the services held in this magnificent building; this is a tradition we are proud to inherit and pass on. The Abbey's choristers sing a vast repertoire of music from all over the western world, spanning more than five hundred years. Besides singing for services in the Abbey, the choir is much in demand for concerts, recordings, as well as radio and TV broadcasts, all of which the boys learn to take in their stride.





Westminster Abbey Choir School is a unique school. Founded exclusively to educate and care for the Abbey choristers, it continues to offer a complete academic and musical education that dovetails perfectly around the boys' choral commitments. Lessons are taught by well-qualified staff in classes of about seven, which allows generous individual attention and maximum participation from all. The school has a consistent record of preparing boys for entry to many of the most prestigious senior schools in the country.

When they arrive in Year 4, boys have most lessons with their form teacher; in subsequent years they move straight on to subject specialists. In such a small school, staff and pupils get to know one another very well, and all staff take an active role in the pastoral care of the boys. Whilst the formal curriculum covers the syllabus required to sit Common Entrance examination at 13+, there is a broad range of additional academic, creative and cultural work, including drama, theatre and concert visits, gallery trips and practical art, as well as a variety of recreational activities.







Naturally, music is central to the life of the school. In addition to singing in one of the most highly regarded choirs in the world, all boys receive tuition in piano and an orchestral instrument as an integral part of the curriculum. Each of them plays in at least one musical ensemble and there are two orchestras. Instrumental practice is timetabled and supervised on a daily basis and great store is set on seeking to establish good, independent practice habits. The majority of the boys go on to win valuable music awards at their future schools.

Some boys arrive as experienced musicians, many are relative beginners. At audition we are looking above all for musical potential in boys whom we believe will both thrive as choristers and also develop as musicians in a richly stimulating environment. Some boys will in time become professional musicians; however, for all of them, the experience of choristership will have enriched their lives immeasurably.







One of the advantages of a dedicated choir school is that sport and co-curricular activities can be arranged around the boys' musical duties. Many choristers are also very keen sportsmen, and within easy reach of the school there is a wide range of sporting and recreational facilities, which cater equally for the sporty and not-so-sporty.

The main team sports are football, hockey and cricket, and junior and senior teams compete keenly with other schools. A feature of the summer term is the programme of outdoor activities, which include sailing, kayaking, climbing and walking.





The Abbey Choir's busy schedule makes it essential that all choristers live in school as boarders. In their first year, boys stay at school during the week but normally go home at weekends. In the second year, as they begin to sing weekend services, they become full boarders. Parents are always welcome to attend services in the Abbey and to take their son out of school after Evensong on Saturdays and Sundays.

The small number of pupils and the generous proportion of resident staff make boarding feel like being part of an extended family. The experience of living, working, playing and making music together is a remarkable one, and boys very quickly come to feel part of the unique Westminster Abbey community.





If you have a son of seven or eight who shows musical promise, please contact us to arrange an informal visit to find out more. You might also like to gain a flavour of the school from the video clips to be found on our website.

Who knows? Your son could just become one of the next generation of choristers at Westminster Abbey. It would certainly be a remarkable experience for him.

Telephone: 020 7654 4918
www.westminster-abbey.org/choir-school





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