

LLANDAF
CATHEDRAL
CHORISTERSHIPS



Choristership Prospectus

from September 2025

| “O Lord, open thou our lips; And our
mouth shall shew forth thy praise.”

Psalm 51. 15

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An Introduction from our Director of Music



“The experience of being a Chorister is one that will remain with your child for the rest of their life.”

We are delighted that you are interested in the possibility of a Choristership for your son or daughter. For children with a love of singing, there can be few better experiences than being a Chorister at Llandaff Cathedral.

Choristers at the Anglican Cathedral in Wales’ capital city benefit from a first-class all-round education at The Cathedral School, Llandaff, and enjoy the opportunity to perform the greatest choral music ever composed to professional standards alongside professional musicians in the inspiring historical setting of Llandaff Cathedral.

The life of a chorister is both demanding and exacting. However, hard work does bring great satisfaction and pride in a job well done, creating a foundation for a lifetime’s enjoyment of music. The heart of a Chorister’s work is the regularity of the pattern of rehearsals and services Cathedral. Here in Llandaff, Boy and Girl Choristers share these duties equally and between them, singing almost every day during term time. There are also special opportunities: concerts, broadcasts, recordings and tours, as well as services at Christmas and Easter.

Throughout their time with us, our Choristers are supported, encouraged and nurtured so that they can flourish. Being a Chorister is a significant commitment for families too, and parents will also find an environment which helps with the support of your child’s journey. Choristers learn routine, teamwork, discipline and musicianship which aids their confidence and work ethic, impacting their life beyond their time in the choir.

The experience of being a Chorister is one that will remain with your child for the rest of their life. We hope that you find much of the information you require in this Prospectus and thank you for your initial interest in Choristerships here in Llandaff.

Stephen Moore

Director of Music

The Choir of Llandaff Cathedral

The Cathedral School and Llandaff Cathedral have a long and proud tradition of choral singing. For this living tradition to continue, we are always on the look-out for girls and boys aged 7-10 who wish to be Choristers.

The Cathedral Choir has existed in its current format in Llandaff since 1880, when, following the Victorian restoration of the cathedral building, Dean Henry Vaughan established Llandaff Cathedral School to educate the boy choristers. In 1996, Lindsay Gray, Headmaster of the Cathedral School and later Director of the Royal School of Church Music, established choristerships for girls and, in 2021, the girls were formally welcomed into the Cathedral Foundation, completing a decades long journey towards parity of opportunity for boys and girls.

The Choristers are joined on a regular basis by 6 Lay Singers and 3 Choral Scholars, who form the back row of the Cathedral Choir. The Choir typically sings 7 services a weeks, as well as participating in larger events of local, national, and international significance.

But as important as the contribution of the Choristers is to the life of the Cathedral community is, the benefits that choristerships offer children are immeasurable, and the education they receive helps not only their musical talents to flourish, but also other crucial life skills to develop, including:

- Organisation & time management
- Teamwork
- Independent development
- Confidence
- Social interaction
- Good work ethic

Choristers form friendships with children across the entire span of year groups in the choir, with many of these friendships lasting a lifetime. Being a chorister is a significant commitment and is demanding of both children and their families, but the enrichment they receive in return is worth this commitment. Many Choristers maintain their connection with the Cathedral long after their time in the choir has ended, and many go on to pursue careers in music. Recent alumni of the choir have gone on to study at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with many holding scholarships.

We hope that this Prospectus will answer any questions you may have about your child becoming a chorister, but if you would like to discuss this opportunity further, please feel free to contact the Director of Music, Stephen Moore, who will happily arrange an informal chat with you.



Being a Chorister

Choristers sing almost every day. Be it in a morning rehearsal or for a service or concert, a regular immersion in a broad, diverse world of music making is the foundation of life as a chorister.

Life as a chorister begins in year 4 when children join the choir as a Probationer. In their first year, Probationers (or Probs) learn the basics of being a Chorister, beginning on a reduced schedule and building up to full duties. They begin to develop their singing technique and confidence, as well as starting to learn some of the core repertoire of the Choir. Alongside their regular rehearsals, Probationers also have individual sessions with the Assistant Director of Music and the Vocal Tutor, who will help ensure that their journey through the Chorister pathway gets off to a good start. Probationers are also assigned a Senior Chorister as a Mentor, who will look after them during rehearsals and services, and use their own recent experiences to help ensure that their mentee feels comfortable with what they are doing.



At the end of their 'Probationary Period' (usually in Year 5), Choristers are 'made up'. That is to say that they stop being Probationers, are given a 'Surplice' (the white garment worn with choir robes) and are formally admitted to the Cathedral as 'Full Choristers'. They are no longer

mentored by the Senior Choristers, and assume full responsibility for organising themselves and their music during choir.

Choristers are expected to remain in the choir until Year 8 or 9, depending on how their voice develops in the early part of Senior School. Our vocal tutors will monitor the choristers voices during this period of change to ensure that they sing with a healthy technique, and are not pushed beyond what is naturally comfortable for them.



Once the Choristers complete their time in the choir, there will still be plenty of opportunity to make music in the Cathedral. Former Choristers are regularly invited back to sing for specific occasions throughout the year, and there is opportunity for them to join one of the many voluntary choirs at the cathedral.

Chorister Schedule

Monday	8.00am	Rehearsal (Boys and Girls)
	9.05am	Choristers arrive in school
	3.45pm	Chorister tea (Girls only)
	4.30pm	Rehearsal (Girls)
	5.30pm	Evensong (Girls and Lower Voices)
Tuesday	8.00am	Rehearsal (Boys Only)
	9.05am	Choristers arrive in school
	3.45pm	Chorister tea (Boys only)
	4.30pm	Rehearsal (Boys)
	5.30pm	Evensong (Boys Only)
Wednesday	8.00am	Rehearsal (Girls only)
	9.05am	Choristers arrive in school
	3.45pm	Chorister tea (Girls only)
	4.30pm	Rehearsal (Girls)
	5.30pm	Evensong (Girls only)
Thursday	8.00am	Rehearsal (Boys Only)
	9.05am	Choristers arrive in school
	3.45pm	Chorister tea (Boys only)
	4.30pm	Rehearsal (Boys)
	5.30pm	Evensong (Boys and Lower Voices)
Friday	8.00am	Rehearsal (Boys Only)
	9.05am	Choristers arrive in school
		<i>Once per half term, the Choristers sing a service on Fridays</i>
	3.45pm	Chorister tea (Boys or Girls depending on schedule)
	4.30pm	Rehearsal (Boys or Girls)
	5.30pm	Evensong (Boys or Girls and Lower Voices)
Saturday	No regular duties	
Sunday	Sunday duties alternate weekly between Boys and Girls	
	9.45am	Rehearsal
	11.00am	Eucharist
	3.00pm	Rehearsal
	4.00pm	Evensong

Chorister duties are divided equally between the two sets of choristers, with special considerations made when preparing schedules to ensure that neither set is unfairly disadvantaged.

Chorister duties take priority over all other extra-curricular activities. However, the flexibility in the choir schedule for both boys and girls means that it is not impossible for choristers to take part in the other excellent opportunities offered at the Cathedral School.

New Probationers are usually given a reduced schedule to enable them to get used to the routine of chorister life. They may sometimes be given an evening service off, or have it replaced with sessions with our vocal tutor, where they'll learn the basics of singing and musicianship that they'll need throughout their time in the choir.

Alongside its schedule of daily services at the cathedral, the choristers also participate in special events. Since the COVID pandemic, the Cathedral Choir has appeared on multiple television and radio broadcasts, including appearances on BBC Songs of Praise, and on BBC Radio 3 and Radio Wales. Our most notable event took place in September 2022, when the cathedral hosted a service of remembrance for the late Queen Elizabeth II, attended by the then Prime Minister, the First Minister of Wales, and HMs Charles III and Camilla. This service was broadcast live internationally across the world. Two broadcasts on BBC radio are already scheduled for the Michaelmas term of 2024.

Outside of liturgical singing, the choir also perform a series of concerts throughout the academic year, particularly around Christmas, Holy Week, and during the annual Llandaff Cathedral Festival. The choir also regularly undertakes tours and recordings. Tours happen domestically and abroad, with recent programmes taking us to the East of England (St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Ely Cathedral and Cambridge) and to Belgium.

The choir also records regularly. Our most recent commercial recording, *A year at Llandaff*, was released on the Regent Records label in 2023 and is available to buy and to stream.





Benefits of being a chorister

Life as a chorister is fun and inspiring, with exciting opportunities and experiences that will last a lifetime. Here are some reasons why you should consider this wonderful opportunity for your child:

1. **Outstanding education** – All choristers are educated at The Cathedral School, Llandaff, as they have been since the re-establishment of the Cathedral Choir in 1880. CSL regularly boasts excellent results at GCSE and A-Level, and was this year named 'Welsh Independent School of the Year' in the Sunday Times Schools Guide.
2. **Exceptional musical training** – Choristers are trained to work as professional musicians at a young age and discover a love of music that will last a lifetime. They become proficient in their craft through the daily routine of rehearsing and performing.
3. **Friendship** – Choristers make friends for life through their shared experiences and by working as a close-knit team. They span a large age range, enabling them, whilst in school, to build friendships across the year groups.
4. **Skills for life** – The skills developed by choristers go beyond the musical to those needed for life. These include building self-confidence, and resilience, organisation and time management, focus and concentration, and the ability to strive for perfection with a team of peers and adults alike.
5. **Exciting co-curricular opportunities** – Pupils at the Cathedral School develop a lifelong love of learning with an all-round education supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities including school sports teams, musical ensembles, and drama and dance productions.
6. **Financial support** – All Choristers receive a subsidy of 35% towards their school fees for the duration of their choristership.

Expectations

The Cathedral Choir is a professional ensemble which has worked hard over the years to establish a reputation of excellence for itself and the profile of the engagements the choir now enjoys reflects this. As such, we place high expectations on our choristers, particularly in terms of their commitment and discipline, giving the best of themselves at all times. Whilst these expectations combined with a busy schedule may seem extraordinary for young individuals, we find that choristers develop an excellent work ethic becomes apparent in their academic work, and is a trait that they carry with them into their adult lives.

Attendance and absences

Choristers are expected to attend all commitments listed on their schedule. Effort is made to ensure that clashes with school activities are avoided. However, we realise that sometimes absences are sometimes unavoidable. In these cases, we ask that you inform us as soon as possible when it is clear that a chorister will not be able to attend.

Leaving the choir

Choristers are expected to remain in the choir until the end of Year 8. In some cases, vocal change may mean that some choristers need to leave the choir before the end of their final year. If it becomes clear that this may be the case, the Director of Music will begin a process in consultation with the chorister's singing teacher, the cathedral's vocal tutor, the Canon Precentor, and the chorister's parents to ensure that the correct outcome is reached regarding both the vocal health and the pastoral care of the chorister in question.

At the end of Year 8, and at the discretion of the Director of Music, choristers may be invited to stay in the choir for an additional year. Again, this process will be undertaken in consultation with the chorister's parents, singing teacher, and with staff from Cathedral School.





Applying to become a Chorister

Who can become a Chorister?

The choir is open to any children aged 7-13. Children typically audition in the Lent term of Year 3 and join the choir as probationers in Year 4. Choristers are required to attend the Cathedral School, Llandaff.

The next step

If your son or daughter would like to explore becoming a chorister, please contact the Registrar, Ms Deborah Whitehouse on 029 2083 8504 or registrar@cathedral-school.co.uk in the first instance.

Stephen Moore, Director of Music at Llandaff Cathedral may also be contacted for an informal discussion at stephenmoore@llandaffcathedral.org.uk

The audition process

The auditions are very informal and last for about 15 minutes. We are looking for children who love to sing and perform, and have a good musical ear. Previous experience is helpful, but by no means necessary.

In the audition, candidates will be asked to:

- Sing back notes played to them on the piano,
- Sing back short melodies
- Clap short rhythms
- Read a short passage of text aloud

The Director of Music will be joined by Assistant Director of Music and the cathedral's Vocal Tutor, all of whom will make sure the experience is relaxed and fun.

Our people

Mr Stephen Moore
Director of Music

Stephen is responsible for all music making in the cathedral, and in particular for directing, training, and managing the Cathedral Choirs.

Mr Aaron Shilson
Assistant Director of Music

Aaron is the principal accompanist for the cathedral choirs, and also assists in directing them. He is director of the Majestas Consort, the Cathedral's adult voluntary choir.

The Reverend Canon Ian Yemm
Canon Precentor

As Canon Precentor, Ian has overall responsibility of the Liturgy and Music in the Cathedral, and has overall responsibility for all the Cathedral's musicians. Ian himself is a musician, and spent a large portion of his career singing with the Welsh National Opera, and so on occasion assists in training the choristers.

Mrs Olivia Moore
Chorister Vocal Tutor

Olivia assists in the training of the probationers, as well as coaching senior choristers throughout the year. She is a trained opera singer, and also sings as part of the back row.

The Reverend Gareth Rayner-Williams
Chorister Pastoral Tutor

Father Gareth is the Chaplain at the Cathedral School, and is responsible for the pastoral well-being of the cathedral choristers. He is the first point of contact between the cathedral and school.

Safeguarding

Children, young people and vulnerable adults are an important part of the community of the Church in Wales and Llandaff Cathedral. They are respected and cherished for their own sake.

The Cathedral is committed to take seriously its responsibilities to protect children, young children and vulnerable adults and safeguard their welfare. The Cathedral adopts the Church in Wales Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and upholds its Code of Good Practice.

For more information, visit
www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk/safeguarding/

