

# EXETER CATHEDRAL CHORISTER PROGRAMME AT EXETER SCHOOL

From September 2026



A School of Great Character



Dear parents

Exeter has a long and proud tradition of choral music, deeply rooted in the life of the Cathedral and the city itself. I am delighted to share this brochure with you as a celebration of the chorister programme and its next chapter at Exeter School.

For families for whom the chorister programme is not of interest, Exeter School also offers a clear and welcoming admissions pathway from nursery onwards, through the pre-prep, junior and senior schools, ensuring that every child can benefit from our education and care.

Our priority is, and always will be, the children. We are committed to providing a secure, nurturing and aspirational environment in which pupils can flourish academically, musically and personally. Exeter School is a community built on kindness, character and ambition, and we are proud to support the chorister programme in close partnership with Exeter Cathedral.

Families can be reassured that the chorister programme will retain the features that make it so special: musical excellence, a clear daily structure, and outstanding pastoral care. The appointment of Mr Jonny Titchin in the newly created position of Head of Chorister Care ensures dedicated support for each chorister's wellbeing.

Looking ahead, Dr Rainbow, Exeter School's new Head from September 2026, is very much looking forward to welcoming choristers and other pupils joining from Exeter Cathedral School, and to getting to know families as they become part of the Exeter School community. He is excited by the opportunity

to build on Exeter's strong musical heritage and to lead the school into this next chapter.

Exeter School offers a rich and balanced education, with full access to academic, co-curricular and pastoral provision. Choristers, and all new pupils, will quickly become an integral part of our school community, and we are committed to ensuring they are supported to thrive across all aspects of school life.

This brochure outlines how the chorister programme will operate at Exeter School, the care that surrounds it, and the opportunities available to pupils. It includes information about general (non-chorister) admissions into the nursery through to Year 8 for September 2026. I hope it provides clarity and gives you reassurance as we look ahead to the next chapter of the chorister story in Exeter.

Yours sincerely

**Mr Graham Bone**  
Acting Head

# A New Chapter in a Historic Tradition

For centuries, the sound of choristers has been woven into the life of Exeter Cathedral and the city itself. This rich musical heritage continues with confidence and care as the chorister programme enters an exciting new chapter at Exeter School. Exeter Cathedral has a long and distinguished tradition of nurturing young choristers. Generations of children have balanced academic learning with the discipline and joy of being a chorister, growing in confidence, character and musicianship.

Exeter School is honoured to take on responsibility for the chorister programme and to build on its long-established foundations. Working closely with the Cathedral, we are committed to supporting the next generation of choristers through a programme that encourages them to aspire, to engage with challenges, and to develop musically, academically and personally, ensuring this important tradition continues.



# Admissions and Transition

## Will Exeter School guarantee places for ECS pupils for September 2026?

Yes, for choristers. Choristers in Years 4–8 (as at Sept 2026) who wish to continue in the programme will be offered a place without needing to sit an entrance assessment.\*

*\* In rare cases, if academic information suggests a child may not thrive here, we will discuss this openly and supportively with families.*

Non-choristers will join our usual, age-appropriate entrance assessment process. Pupils will sit the entrance assessments appropriate for their year group as part of our usual admissions process. This route will also apply to pupils, currently in the chorister programme, who do not wish to continue with it.

Families considering Exeter School, or those who are part of the chorister programme are warmly invited to attend an information session at Exeter School on **Tuesday 13 January, 9.00–11.00am**. This informal event offers the opportunity to meet the Heads, tour the school, meet Mr Titchin, and speak with our learning support team. Please email [admissions@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@exeterschool.org.uk) to book your space.

A dedicated senior school assessment session has been arranged for **Thursday 15 January**, designed

to make joining the senior school as straightforward as possible. This session is open to non-chorister pupils currently in Years 6 and 7.

Junior school assessments (Years 3–6) for September 2026 entry will take place on **Saturday 31 January**. Please contact the admissions team to register for this session.

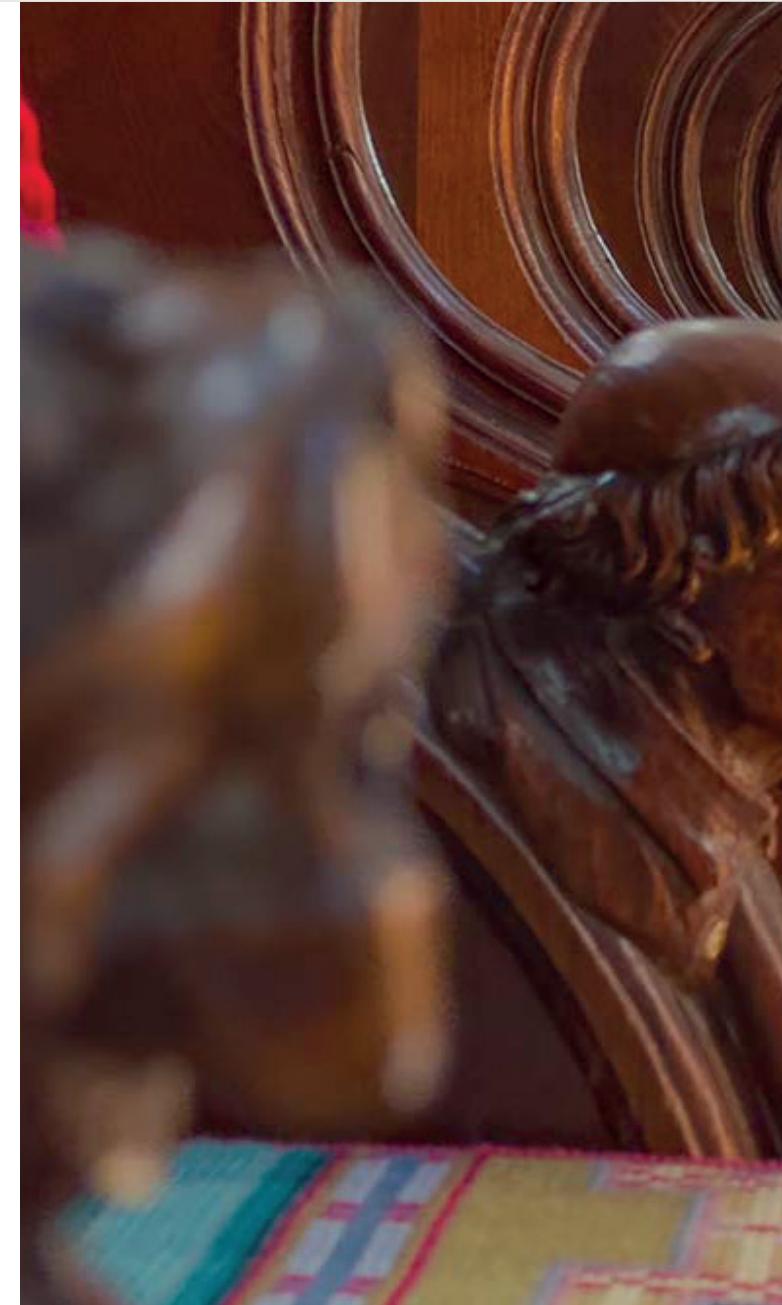
Pupils are not expected to have undertaken any specific preparation, and this will be taken fully into account during the assessment process.

If the dates listed have already passed, please contact admissions to arrange a personal tour or to enquire about current availability. Applications are welcomed throughout the year, subject to space.

Pupils currently in Nursery to Year 2 do not need to sit any assessments at this stage, but as with all prospective pupils, a taster day will need to be had before any offer is made. Places in Nursery to Year 2 will be allocated where available, and pupils will only be assessed when they transition into Year 3.

## Can my child join before September 2026?

We recommend pupils complete their year at ECS to allow a positive ending and smooth transition. We hope that this allows families to feel able to enjoy and celebrate their final months at the





school throughout the spring and summer terms, confident that their child has a secure place with us for September 2026. Choristers must remain at ECS until July 2026 to continue their Cathedral commitments.

### **How will chorister admissions work from 2027 onwards?**

Children will audition with Exeter Cathedral and sit Exeter School's entrance assessments. This ensures that future choristers are both musically suited to the demands of Cathedral choir life and well placed to thrive academically at Exeter School.

### **Do we need to register with Exeter School for a place?**

Yes, all prospective pupils (including current choristers) must be registered in order to be considered for admission to Exeter School. Some families may already be registered from previous applications, so we recommend contacting our admissions team first ([admissions@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@exeterschool.org.uk)) to check your registration status.

To support families, the usual registration fee of £150 plus VAT will be waived for current ECS pupils who are not already registered. For more information, please contact our admissions team on 01392 307080.

### **How will you support pupils moving to Exeter School?**

Exeter School is a happy school and has a strong pastoral culture, and we will provide a carefully planned programme of support to help every child settle confidently.

Our junior and senior pastoral teams will work closely with families to understand each child's needs. All our pupils benefit from:

- A dedicated form tutor
- Peer buddies
- Heads of Section/Year support
- A full pastoral team including chaplain and pastoral assistants

Pupils will be joining us at the start of an academic year, a time when we welcome many new pupils across a range of year groups. This naturally creates an environment where forming new friendships and settling in feels easier and more organic.

Our aim is to ensure every pupil feels known, welcomed, and supported so they can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally during this transition and beyond.

# The Chorister Programme at Exeter School

## What will the chorister programme look like at Exeter School?

The programme will feel familiar and reassuring, providing continuity for families while benefiting from Exeter School's broad educational and pastoral provision.

A typical day includes:

- Before school: rehearsals at the Exeter School Music School, with morning drop-off by parents
- During the school day: full access to the curriculum, lessons and wider school life
- After school: rehearsals and services at Exeter Cathedral, with parental collection from the Cathedral at the end of the day
- Weekends and holidays: services and rehearsals held at the Cathedral

Each chorister receives one weekly private music lesson (voice or instrument), funded by the Cathedral. Musical direction continues under Timothy Noon, Director of Music at Exeter Cathedral, working in close collaboration with Exeter School's music department.

## How is pastoral care provided for choristers?

The wellbeing of choristers is central to the programme's success. From September 2026, pastoral support is led by a dedicated Head of Chorister Care, and we are delighted that Mr Jonny Titchin has agreed to take on this role. Mr Titchin is Head of Junior School Music at Exeter School and will be familiar to many of you for his inspiring work with young musicians.

He is also an active performer and countertenor, bringing wide professional experience to his teaching and leadership. This new role will ensure:

- High-quality pastoral and safeguarding oversight
- Day-to-day support for choristers and families
- Close collaboration with the Cathedral and Exeter School



Mr Jonny Titchin

The Head of Chorister Care is trained to Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) level, ensuring robust safeguarding, clear communication and joined-up care. This dedicated role ensures that every chorister is known as an individual and supported academically and emotionally.

## Will choristers have full access to Exeter School life?

Yes. Choristers at Exeter School will enjoy the full breadth of school life, alongside their peers.

This includes:

- A broad and ambitious academic curriculum
- Access to clubs, trips, sport, drama and enrichment activities
- Participation in the school's vibrant music, arts and sporting activities

The school will work closely with Cathedral staff to help choristers balance their commitments, supporting high standards without overload.

## Do you offer scholarships for pupils who are not choristers?

Exeter School does offer scholarships, but they work a bit differently from fee discount awards. Scholarships at Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12 are awarded for excellence in art, drama, music and sport, recognising a pupil's talent and giving them access to an elite development programme, status within the school, and opportunities to influence school life. They are honorary awards and do not include a fee reduction on their own. Families can, however, apply separately for a means-tested bursary (which can reduce fees by up to 100% in exceptional circumstances) to support a scholarship if needed.

### What are your fees?

Our current fees for 2025/26 are detailed below.

Year group	Exeter School termly fees £
Reception (over 5s)	3,599
Years 1 and 2	3,725
Years 3 and 4	5,299
Year 5	5,699
Year 6	5,699
Years 7 and 8	6,998
Years 9 – 13	6,998

### What discounts do you offer?

We offer a 5% sibling discount to the younger child while two children are at the school at the same time and 10% to the third or more. Means-tested bursaries are available from Year 7, please contact the admissions team for more information.

### Will you honour any financial support for pupils inside and outside the chorister programme?

Yes. Exeter School will match any % discount you received in the autumn term of 2025 (as detailed on your ECS fees invoice for that term) for the entire 2026-27 academic year.

This commitment ensures continuity of support throughout your child's first year with us, giving you confidence and financial stability as your children move to Exeter School.

Awards given to choristers from the Cathedral or other organisations will continue with no change.

# The Exeter School Academic Experience

### What is Exeter School's academic ethos?

We place character at the heart of all aspects of school life. Our teaching inspires and challenges pupils to love learning, and the curriculum promotes independence, critical thinking and strong study habits from an early age. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of academic enrichment including clubs, societies, visiting speakers, and trips that all take learning beyond the classroom.

### How will you assess and support pupils who may have learning gaps or SEND?

Pupils outside of the chorister programme for September 2026, and all pupils from Year 3 from September 2027, will sit the Exeter School assessment process. These assessments allow us to understand each pupil's academic strengths and any areas where additional support may be helpful.

We ask families to share any relevant reports prior to assessment so that we can ensure appropriate arrangements and considerations are in place. As with all new applicants, our learning support team will carry out further screening to identify any potential SEND or learning needs and put suitable support plans in place. This ensures every pupil can access the curriculum confidently, make strong progress and thrive both academically and personally.

### What is Exeter School's learning support provision?

The learning support provision is designed to help

pupils with specific learning needs and ensure they succeed alongside their peers. In the junior school, pupils are screened (e.g., for dyslexia) and supported through tailored small-group work and targeted interventions in English and maths, with needs identified via assessment and referrals where appropriate.

In the senior school, dedicated Learning Support Coordinators work with pupils, parents, teachers and external agencies to put individual strategies in place, produce personalised strategy sheets, and organise appropriate exam access arrangements such as extra time.

Support is integrated into classroom teaching and small group or targeted withdrawal, rather than regular one-to-one tuition, and staff are trained to understand and respond to diverse learning needs.

### Music, culture and opportunity

Music thrives at Exeter School. Alongside the chorister programme, pupils can access:

- Orchestras, choirs, chamber groups and ensembles
- Jazz, brass, wind and string groups
- Performances, concerts and community events throughout the year

Choristers are part of a wider musical ecosystem that celebrates excellence, collaboration and enjoyment.

# Practical Arrangements

## What about uniform?

Pupils transferring to Exeter School have a couple of uniform options to make the transition as smooth as possible. They can:

- Purchase new uniform through Schoolblazer ([www.schoolblazer.com/](http://www.schoolblazer.com/))
- Purchase second-hand items from our school store, where a large stock of our old uniform and a limited stock of the new uniform is available. Old style Exeter School uniform can be worn until September 2028.

## What transport options are available?

We run an extensive bus network with routes across the region. Bookings can be made via our dedicated transport portal, where you can enter your postcode, find your nearest stop, and view bespoke travel information. In addition, there is a minibus service between Exeter School and Exeter Pre-Prep in Exminster.

Parents of choristers are responsible for transporting their children to practice in the morning before school and collecting them from the Cathedral at the end of the day. The Cathedral will take choristers to the Cathedral after school as required. As is the current case, school bus times do not align with the practice times.

## What are the timings of the school day?

- Junior School: 8:30am-3:45pm
- Senior School: 8:30am-4pm

Choristers rehearse before school and attend Cathedral rehearsals/services after school and in the holidays.

## What is Exeter School's average class size?

The average class size varies across the school. In the junior school it is typically around 18-20 pupils per class, and in the senior school it's generally about 20-24 pupils per class. This reflects the school's aim to keep classes small enough for good teacher-pupil interaction and personalised learning.





# Co-curricular Life

## What opportunities are available?

There are a huge range of enrichment activities across the junior and senior school both at lunch time and after school. In the junior school clubs range from sports, choirs, cookery club, coding club and art club to name a few. There is also a free late room which runs until 5:30pm; here pupils can complete their homework and have some down time before being picked up.

In the senior school across an average week, we offer 30 musical clubs, 40 sports clubs, and a further 30 general clubs and societies, meaning there is something for everyone. The library is open for pupils until 5:15pm each day. In addition, we run two field days per year, two house days per year, and at least one residential trip for each year group.

## What music ensembles does Exeter School have?

We offer a vibrant range of music ensembles to suit all interests and abilities. Pupils can join one of the school's orchestras, chamber ensembles, choirs, brass groups, and jazz bands, along with specialist groups such as the samba drum troupe and various wind, string, and saxophone ensembles. These groups rehearse regularly and perform in concerts and community events throughout the year, giving musicians of all ages plenty of opportunities to develop their skills and enjoy making music together.

## What sort of drama opportunities do you offer?

We offer a wide range of drama opportunities throughout school life. In the junior school, every class enjoys a weekly drama lesson linked to their topics, exploring poetry, prose and play performances. Pupils in Year 6 also study Shakespeare and have end-of-year productions in Years 4 and 6.

In the senior school we have three productions per year; one each for lower school, middle school (house drama) and upper school. Pupils can take part as performers or

behind-the-scenes in set, tech, costume and more, and participate in LAMDA classes with exam opportunities. There are also theatre trips and chances to audition for prestigious programmes like the National Youth Theatre.

## What is Exeter School's sporting provision?

We offer a comprehensive PE and sport programme for all pupils, with regular timetabled physical education lessons alongside games sessions each week. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities cover a wide range of sports, including rugby, hockey, netball, cricket, football, tennis, squash, swimming and more, and pupils can compete in fixtures against other schools at various levels. The school's excellent facilities, including large playing fields, hockey astros, a 25 metre indoor swimming pool, sports hall, fitness suite, climbing wall and squash courts, support training, competition and fitness development. There are numerous clubs, teams and competitive opportunities, as well as sports tours and options in the sixth form to continue sport alongside academic studies.

## Can pupils start clubs immediately?

Yes, all pupils can join activities from the start of term. Some clubs and trips have limited spaces.

## Can choristers join all activities?

Absolutely. We work closely with Cathedral staff to ensure all choristers can access the full range of activities while also supporting them to maintain a healthy balance and avoid becoming overwhelmed.

# Exeter Pre-Prep School

## How does the separate site affect daily life?

Pre-prep pupils benefit from a calm, age-appropriate setting in Exminster. A shuttle bus links the site to the main school for convenience. Staff maintain close communication across sites, ensuring continuity in pastoral care, academic support, and school events.



You are welcome to visit both sites to see the schools and meet staff to help you feel confident about your child's journey through Exeter School from pre-prep onwards.

## What is the ethos and environment like?

Exeter Pre-Prep provides a nurturing, stimulating, and age-appropriate learning environment for children in Nursery to Year 2. The school focuses on developing curiosity, confidence, creativity, and independence in each child, laying strong foundations for their future learning.

The ethos is closely aligned with Exeter School's wider character education programme. Children are encouraged to develop virtues such as kindness, resilience, collaboration, and curiosity from the start, both in the classroom and through play, co-curricular activities, and special events. There is a strong emphasis on early literacy (all children read with an adult daily), numeracy, and creative development, alongside opportunities for music, sport, and performance.

# Looking Ahead with Confidence

This new chapter is one of continuity and opportunity. The chorister programme remains closely connected to Exeter Cathedral, supported by Exeter School, and led with strong musical, academic and pastoral oversight. The Cathedral and Exeter School share a clear commitment to the education and wellbeing of every chorister.

Exeter School also supports clear and flexible admissions for non-chorister pupils across the pre-prep, junior and senior schools, giving families confidence in admissions, progression and long-term planning.

Exeter School is committed to:

- Honouring the historic role of choristers in the life of the city
- Supporting each child as an individual
- Maintaining musical excellence within a broad education
- Providing clear admissions routes at each school stage for every pupil, choristers and non-choristers alike
- Enabling smooth progression through the school

The chorister programme continues to offer a distinctive musical education rooted in the Cathedral tradition, while Exeter School welcomes pupils with a wide range of interests and talents. Whether entering as choristers or non-choristers, children are supported to grow within a single, coherent school community.

The future of the chorister programme in Exeter is secure with Exeter School. Do get in touch for a chat about how your children can join Exeter School, whatever their musical abilities.

# Communication and Next Steps

## How will Exeter School keep families updated?

You'll receive regular updates and clear guidance throughout the admissions process. The admissions team is always available by phone, email, or in person, and you can arrange a chat with Mrs Williams or another team member at a convenient time.

Our website includes FAQs, guides, and all the information you need to prepare for assessments. In the summer term, we also run information and settling-in sessions for pupils and families, helping everyone feel confident and ready for the start of term.

## Can we visit before deciding?

Yes. You are very welcome to visit Exeter School before deciding if it is the right school for your children. We have arranged a special open morning specifically for ECS and chorister families. During the visit, you will have the chance to look around the school, meet Mr Bone and Mrs Van, speak with our Head of Chorister Care, Mr Titchin, and meet a member of our learning support team. This open morning will take place on Tuesday 13 January at 9.00am, with arrival via our Manston Terrace entrance. We would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance by emailing [admissions@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@exeterschool.org.uk) or using the QR code below.



Alternatively you can book an individual tour to see the school in action and see our facilities.

## What if we are unsure that Exeter School is right for our child?

We encourage you to come and talk to us. You can come to the open morning or book an individual tour. It can



Acting Head of Exeter School – Mr Bone



Head of Exeter Junior School – Mrs van Schalkwyk (Mrs Van)



Head of Exeter Pre-Prep – Mr Ayling



Director of External Relations – Mrs Williams



Deputy Head (Pupil Development, Welfare and Wellbeing) – Miss Dunning



Deputy Head (Enrichment, Character and Community), including the Chorister Programme – Miss Rose

also be helpful to speak with parents and pupils currently at Exeter School to hear about their experiences first-hand. We are always happy to discuss your child's needs and answer any questions to help you make an informed decision.

## Who to contact with questions

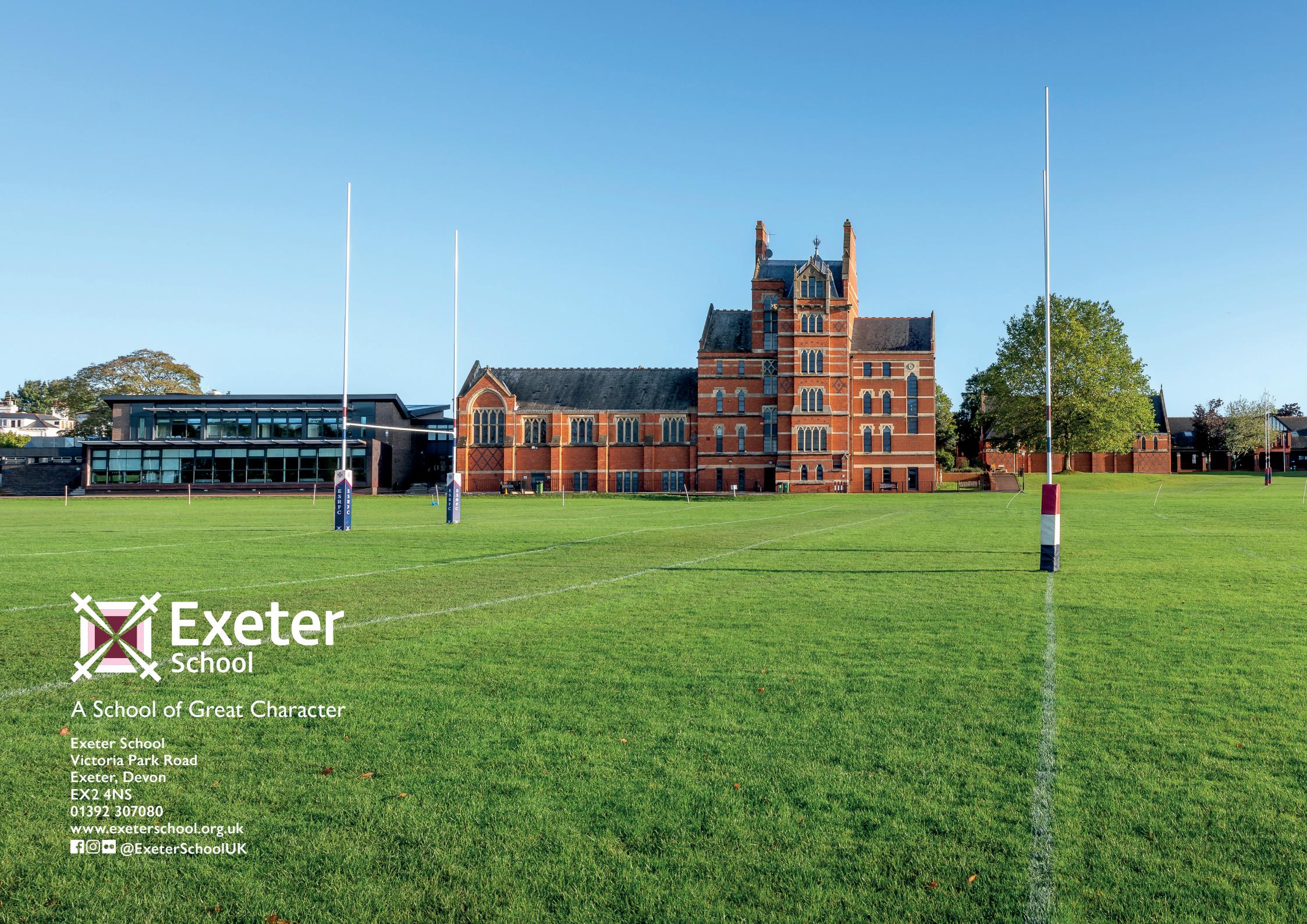
If you have any queries or would like further information, please feel free to get in touch with the relevant member of our team.

- Acting Head of Exeter School – Mr Bone  
[head@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:head@exeterschool.org.uk)
- Head of Exeter Junior School – Mrs van Schalkwyk  
[juniorschoolhead@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:juniorschoolhead@exeterschool.org.uk)
- Head of Exeter Pre-Prep – Mr Ayling  
[preprephead@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:preprephead@exeterschool.org.uk)
- Director of External Relations – Mrs Williams  
[esw@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:esw@exeterschool.org.uk)
- Admissions team  
[admissions@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@exeterschool.org.uk) | 01392 307080
- Deputy Head (Pupil Development, Welfare and Wellbeing) – Miss Dunning  
[ad@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:ad@exeterschool.org.uk)

- Deputy Head (Enrichment, Character and Community), including the Chorister Programme – Miss Rose  
[bvr@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:bvr@exeterschool.org.uk)

## Key dates

- Tuesday 13 January
  - Information morning for chorister and other ECS families at Exeter School
- Thursday 15 January
  - Year 6 and Year 7 assessment day for ECS pupils
- Saturday 31 January
  - Junior school assessment morning
- Friday 13 February
  - Senior school offer holders tea
- Wednesday 25 February
  - Exeter Pre-Prep open morning
- Thursday 7 May
  - Exeter School summer open evening



A School of Great Character

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EX2 4NS

01392 307080

[www.exeterschool.org.uk](http://www.exeterschool.org.uk)

 @ExeterSchoolUK