

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL

Statements of School Policy & Practice (2009/2010)

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B.1 General Principles of the UCS Academic Ethos

UCS believes in giving its students breadth, choice and balance at all stages in their education, in providing strong intellectual values as well as opportunities for creativity, and in allowing, as age and maturity permits, increasing subject-specialisation.

The educational culture at UCS seeks to provide challenge, variety and freedom for its students as well as to foster curiosity, intellectual independence and imagination. In the 'conventional' taught curriculum students are encouraged to generate a love of learning for its own sake and also to learn to develop the skills and understanding necessary to make important choices about their own educational direction. Each subject/department aims to combine a rigorous programme of study with a range of enrichment opportunities to enhance a student's appreciation and understanding of a subject as well as to connect this learning with skills and knowledge gained from other subjects. Each teacher seeks to encourage students to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding but they also try to demand that the students reflect upon the nature and content of their learning, that they develop habits of critical inquiry and that they gradually become autonomous and self-sufficient learners.

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B.2 General Principles of the UCS Curriculum

The academic curriculum at University College School follows the customary pattern of providing a wide range of subjects in the Lower and Middle Schools, subsequently narrowing to provide specialised study in the Sixth Form. It is designed at all stages to enhance a pupil's academic experience and his appreciation of the breadth of knowledge. The academic curriculum is supported by a timetabled programme of PSHE, in coordination with the school's extensive pastoral system, and by an equally extensive programme of sports education. Although a degree of narrowing is inevitable at GCSE and at AS/A level, it is school policy to offer pupils the widest possible choice in their combinations of subjects, unrestricted by the constraints of an imposed 'blocking' system.

In the Entry and Shell Years boys follow a common curriculum founded upon the best features of the National Curriculum, but extending beyond the National Curriculum's restrictions to provide a wide variety of additional work. Boys are not required to sit national tests at Key Stage Three, but they are expected comfortably to meet and to exceed their demands. In the Lower Remove this broad curriculum expands further to provide pupils with the option of studying a further classical or modern language.

For their GCSE programme, all boys study Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, at least one modern language, at least one science, and a further five subjects.

In the Transitus, pupils will normally study four subjects to AS level. Students may choose to continue with all four subjects to A-level in the Sixth Form or to narrow down to three subjects. Pupils at this level continue to follow the school's sports programme; on Friday afternoons there are additional opportunities for non-athletic activities.

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B.3 UCS Curriculum Policy

It is the policy of the school to give its students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. We aim to provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those with a statement; and where a pupil has a statement, we aim to provide an education which fulfils its requirements. We ensure that all pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy as well as giving pupils personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos. We endeavour to give appropriate careers advice for our pupils and, for those above the compulsory school age, we provide a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs. Overall, our policy is to allow all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress and to provide an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We believe that all our students have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual abilities and differences into account. In curriculum design, we are guided by our belief in the integrity of traditional academic subjects and in their value in providing the best framework for young people as they develop a full appreciation of the breadth of human knowledge. Equally, we regard physical and creative experience as being vital in the full development of students.

We keep the UCS curriculum under regular review, as we seek new and original methods to support the acquisition of knowledge and skill, in order to help students to develop not only intellectually but also socially, personally and emotionally as they prepare to take their places in the world.

The academic curriculum at University College School follows the customary pattern of providing a wide range of subjects in the Lower and Middle Schools, subsequently narrowing to provide specialised study in the Sixth Form. It is designed at all stages to enhance a pupil's academic experience and his appreciation of the breadth of knowledge. The academic curriculum is supported by a timetabled programme of PSHE, in coordination with the school's extensive pastoral system, and by an equally extensive programme of sports education. Although a degree of narrowing is inevitable at GCSE and at AS/A level, it is school policy to offer pupils the widest possible choice in their combinations of subjects, unrestricted by the constraints of an imposed 'blocking' system. We aim to ensure that a student has the greatest possible opportunities for individual choice and specialization.

In the Entry and Shell Years boys follow a common curriculum founded upon the best features of the National Curriculum, but extending beyond the National Curriculum's restrictions to provide a wide variety of additional work. Boys are not required to sit national tests at Key Stage Three, but they are expected comfortably to meet and to

exceed their demands. In the Lower Remove this broad curriculum expands further to provide pupils with the option of studying a further classical or modern language.

For their GCSE programme, all boys study Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, at least one modern language, at least one science, and a further five subjects.

In the Transitus, students usually study four subjects to AS level. Students may choose to continue with all four subjects to A-level in the Sixth Form or to narrow down to three subjects. There are opportunities for students to take an additional AS subject if they drop one of their A2 subjects. Students at this level continue to follow the school's sports programme; on Friday afternoons there are additional opportunities for non-athletic activities, as well as further opportunities for sport.

In the Lower and Middle School 6 periods of curriculum time are allocated to physical activity, while in the Sixth Form, there are 3 periods and the option of a further 3 periods during the Activities Programme.

Access to the Curriculum

The school believes in ensuring that all students have full access to the UCS curriculum, regardless of their learning needs. The only situation where a student might suffer any restriction would be where access might have implications for the health or safety of a student.

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B.4 The Structure of the Curriculum

Overview

The UCS has a one-week timetable consisting of 45 periods of 35 minutes each. While such a structure places certain constraints upon allocation of teaching time for individual subjects, it is school policy to try to allow individual departments choice, where possible, as to the allocation of single, double and triple periods. The current structure allows for a balance to be struck between the differing teaching and learning demands of individual subjects.

The Lower School

In the Lower School there are nine periods in the teaching day (except for the Entry on Friday, which has 8 periods), each of thirty five minutes. The subjects studied are Mathematics, English, French, Geography, Combined Science, Latin, Music, Art, Technology, Drama, PSHE, PE and games. In the Entry year ICT is not taught as a separate subject but instead through a designated ICT lesson within two subjects, Geography and Science, a total of two lessons per week. In addition, from 2009, a pilot 'enrichment' lesson is offered, called Ideas, which endeavours to provide both skills-based and subject-based enrichment.

In year 8, the three sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, are taught separately. From 2010-11, following a pilot scheme in 2009-10, ICT will be taught through a designated subject area, in this case an extra lesson of History each week.

As some boys joining the Lower School have not previously studied French, this is taught in sets, thereby allowing such pupils to receive special attention. With this exception, all subjects are taught in mixed ability form units, usually consisting of 22 or 23 boys.

The Middle School

In the Middle School the curriculum remains the same as that taught in the Lower School, with the following modifications. The teaching of Mathematics now takes place in sets, for the benefit both of those who find the subject more demanding and of those who are capable of working at a faster pace. The Sciences have an increased time allocation, and the opportunity is provided for the study of up to two further languages: Greek, German or Spanish. In year 9, for those few students who it is thought are not best suited to studying a third language, a course in European Cultural Studies is available.

Boys nominate their choices for GCSE studies at the end of the Lower Remove and pursue those studies through the following two years. All boys continue with English Language, English Literature and Mathematics. In addition they choose seven other subjects, selected from the following; Biology, Physics, Chemistry, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Greek, History, Geography, Business Studies, Art, Design and Technology, ICT, Physical Education, Drama and Music. Pupils may choose freely from this 'menu' with the sole *proviso* that, to maintain sufficient breadth in their studies, they are required to include at least one modern language from those that they have previously studied and at least one science subject.

These arrangements provide the pupil with some scope to tailor his own GCSE programme, focusing upon his particular skills and interests, while maintaining a sufficiently broad approach. The school's policy is to provide guidance to pupils and to parents by means of a booklet provided for each pupil and backed by a series of parents' meetings held in the Spring and Summer Terms of the Lower Remove Year. In addition, it is expected that each boy will receive detailed and individual advice from his form teacher and from his Deme Warden. Whilst UCS provides an unusual degree of choice for GCSE students, it also aims to ensure that a student does not limit later degree choice by their choices at this early stage in their academic career.

Boys remain in the same form and Deme groups throughout the Middle School, but each GCSE subject is studied in sets drawn from the whole year group. As a result of this arrangement sets are generally restricted to around twenty students, although in some subjects sets may be much smaller. As a general rule, sets will not exceed 23 students, unless on an exceptional basis.

The Sixth Form

All students usually study four AS Levels and either three or four A2s; it is occasionally possible for a student to study either fewer or more AS or A Levels and such a decision is made in consultation with parents, Deme Wardens, and Heads of Department. UCS continues to allow students a completely free choice of subject options and there are no fixed timetable blocks and the curriculum expands to allow students the opportunity to study a broader range of subject options. In addition to the subjects offered for GCSE students may also choose Economics (Business Studies is no longer an option), History of Art, Philosophy, and Politics. The History department offers three syllabus options: Late Modern, Early Modern and Medieval History; Mathematics offers Maths with Statistics or Mechanics as well as Further Maths (which is taken in two subject blocks). It is usual for many students to continue with four A Levels in the Sixth Form year. Set-sizes in the Transitus and Sixth Form tend to be much smaller than in the Middle and Lower Schools, with the largest sets usually being around 14 students.

Students continue to be members of Demes, although there is a team of two full-time and two part-time Sixth Form Tutors who coordinate the T7 programme and UCAS applications. The T7 programme is taken in addition to the four AS subjects which all students take and forms a programme of personal, social and health education; it takes place on Tuesdays in period 7 and although based principally on Form-based discussion groups also includes year-group lectures and seminars. In addition to

preparing all students to meet the challenges of adulthood, it also prepares students for the UCAS process and by being based in Form-Groups allows the Form Tutors time to develop a close relationship with their Forms. This in turn ensures that the process of a student's application to university is monitored and supported closely and that all students are encouraged to prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their future life.

On Friday afternoon the Activities Programme provides a programme of non-sporting, community-based and specialist sports' activities. This programme operates for the Autumn and Spring Terms in the Transitus and during the Autumn Term of the Sixth Form. During the Transitus, students choose from a wide variety of different activities, some academic, some recreational or sporting and some community-based; all students are encouraged to try a different activity each term (although there are some activities, such as Mandarin, which require two terms of study). In the Sixth Form, those students who have not taken part in some form of community service are required to do so – this is often arranged by the students themselves on the basis of a particular area of their own interests.

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B.5 Homework

The school believes in the value and purpose of homework as a means of practising skills learned in lessons, of learning or revising the skills and knowledge acquired during lessons and of developing an increasing capacity for working independently.

It is the school's policy to set homework regularly for all students in all years. All pupils in the Lower and Middle Schools are issued with a Homework Diary, in which homework assignments are recorded. Form-teachers check these diaries regularly. Parents are encouraged to oversee this and to monitor their son's homework habits. In this way, pupils are encouraged, both at home and at school, to develop a responsible attitude towards independent study.

Such homework should be designed to serve one or more of the following purposes:

- a) making acquaintance with new material by reading, researching, learning or annotating it;
- b) learning examples of a type already understood or practising processes already explained;
- c) written practice of work already covered in class;
- d) project work.

The amount of homework set varies from one year group to another. At present the following quantities are considered appropriate: the Lower School are set exercises in two or three subjects per night such as would take an average student twenty to thirty minutes each to complete; the Middle School are set exercises in three subjects per night such as would take an average student thirty to forty five minutes each to complete. In these year groups the setting of homework exercises is regulated by a timetable prepared by the Timetable Team. Copies of this timetable are communicated to parents. As part of the preparation for GCSE it is expected that from time to time homeworks will be set which require longer than the allotted time (for instance in preparing or completing coursework or controlled assessment); in these instances individual departments and subject teachers attempt to balance the timing and frequency of such extra demands in order not to adversely impact on the students' learning in other subjects.

The setting of homework in the Sixth Form while less formalised in its procedures is considered as important and significant a part of Sixth Form study as it is in the Lower and Middle Schools. The complexity and depth of advanced study, however, make it more important than ever to inculcate and to encourage habits of working at home, as well during free time at school. The essential functions of homework, outlined above, remain valid in the Sixth Form, and it is expected that teachers will routinely set assignments to be completed in the pupils' own time to advance the students' coverage of the syllabus and to reinforce work carried out or explained in class. The obligation upon subject teachers to assess such work applies as strongly in the Sixth Form as in any other part of the school.

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B.6 Assessment

UCS considers that assessment of student work is an essential part of aiding a student's intellectual development and is vital in developing a dialogue between a teacher and a student over the student's progress and attainment in learning.

It is school policy that homework and class work, once completed, must be assessed. Assessment criteria appropriate for each year-group are established by each teaching department. Homework based upon the learning of material will normally be backed up by a test, and written work will be corrected in such a way that the pupil clearly understands the nature of any error that she or he has made. The notation used in such assessment is a matter of departmental policy. Written comments will be designed to be helpful to pupils in understanding both the mistakes that they have made and the successes that they have achieved. Criticism will often be necessary, but all assessment should be accompanied by constructive advice as to how the pupil may improve the standard of his or her work. Where possible and appropriate all assessment aims to encourage students to learn from their mistakes and to improve their understanding of a subject.

It is considered to be the responsibility of each department to encourage good standards of accuracy and fluency in English as well as high standards of presentation.

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B.7 Reporting

The parents of students at the school receive reports in three formats. Twice in the academic year they receive a report folder containing the collected reports of all those who teach their son/daughter an academic subject. Parents are invited to add their own comments to these reports if they wish. In addition, parents are invited at least once in each academic year to attend a meeting at school at which they may discuss with members of the teaching staff their child's academic progress and future options. At the end of the Upper Remove and the Sixth Form, parents receive letters from their son's/daughter's form teacher summarizing achievement and progress. In addition to this formal structure, it is school policy to encourage parents to contact form teachers or Lower School or Deme Wardens in writing, in person or by e-mail, whenever a problem arises over the pupil's academic progress.

At the same time, the school conducts a system of internal reporting. This is based upon a series of comments written by each subject teacher in order to inform the form teacher and the Warden of the pupil's progress and application, and to raise any concerns that might be appropriate. These comments are communicated to the pupil by his form teacher in the course of a confidential interview in which the form teacher will summarise the content of the comments and encourage the pupil to respond to them. It is not school policy to communicate these comments *verbatim* to the pupil, nor to communicate them directly to parents, although in many cases they will form the basis of an informal progress report. In this way the school seeks to encourage absolute frankness, both in the reports of the subject teachers and in the response of the pupils.

In a similar vein, a programme of self-assessment is conducted before GCSE choices are made in the Lower Remove and again in the Sixth Form. In their first term of AS level study, Sixth Formers complete a form on which they are invited to comment upon the problems that they feel they have encountered, and the successes that they think they have achieved in making the difficult transition from GCSE to AS/A level studies. The content of these forms will subsequently be discussed with form tutors, in conjunction with the comments written at half-term by the student's teachers, to provide an overview of the pupil's development, viewed from distinct angles. Self-assessment for all students from year 7 onwards forms an integral part of the PSHE programme.

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B.8 Internal & External Examinations

It is UCS policy to prepare students rigorously for both internal and external examinations and to provide firm support for students as they progress through the various examination stages.

Internal Examinations

In every year, except those in which public examinations are taken, internal examinations are set at the end of the summer term. The object of these examinations is to test and to reinforce the work that the pupil has undertaken in the course of the academic year, and to provide information concerning the pupil's progress during the year. In addition many departments run interim tests and examinations at various stages throughout the school year. It is not school policy to make the pupil's progress through the school dependent upon his or her performance in these internal examinations.

Exam Hurdles

The only exception to this rule of unobstructed progress through the school occurs at the end of the Upper Remove Year. While the school does not operate a specific hurdle for a boy to proceed from GCSE to AS/A level studies, it is made clear to parents and pupils that fewer than six GCSE passes at grade B or above is an insecure foundation for AS/A level study here. In making a decision about a pupil's suitability for further study, the particular circumstances and interests of the individual concerned will always be paramount. In most cases, it is not formally required that a pupil should have achieved specified levels at GCSE in the subjects that he chooses to study at AS level. In practice, however, AS level choices are carefully monitored by form teachers, Deme Wardens, Senior Tutors and Heads of Departments, and students will be extensively advised upon the suitability of their subject choices. In certain cases, notably in Mathematics and in Modern Languages, pupils may be refused access to AS level courses if it is felt that their performance at GCSE indicates an insufficient basis in the subject. In all cases, the overriding principle of the advice given will be to secure the best interests of the individual pupil.

External Examinations

Where a choice exists, it is the normal policy of the school to enter all candidates for the highest tier in GCSE or other public examinations, giving them the opportunity of the highest possible grades. Parents will be informed if we believe it to be in the interests of a particular candidate to be entered for a lower tier.

The school will make all arrangements necessary for pupils to be entered for public examinations for which they are being prepared at UCS. If parents wish their child to sit an examination at UCS for which he/she is being prepared externally, they must contact the school's Examinations Officer as early as possible and always by half-term in the Autumn Term before the summer to which the exam entry relates. We cannot undertake that such external examination entries will always be possible. The following principles should be noted:

- Public examination entries will normally only be considered for pupils in the Remove (Year 10) and above, although occasionally there are some exceptions to this rule.
- Public examination entries involving foreign languages that are not taught at UCS present particular difficulties and will not normally be possible, although there are occasional exceptions to this rule.
- Similarly, public examination entries in subjects with a significant coursework component present difficulties and will not normally be considered.
- Before any examination entry can be made the school's Examinations Officer must, by half-term in the Autumn Term, have received full information of the examination board, the subject and component codes, the name and full contact details of the tutor involved and of the institution responsible for exam preparation. It is the responsibility of the pupil (and his family) to provide this information.

Re-sitting External Examinations

It is the policy of the school to offer students in the Sixth Form the possibility of re-sitting certain AS or A2 modules during the Spring Term of year 13 or along with the majority of A2 modules in the Summer Term of year 13. Students will normally hold discussions with subject teachers, Heads of Department, Deme Wardens or Sixth Form Tutors over the possibilities of re-sitting; the decision will be made by balancing the student's overall needs and ambitions with their level of commitment and application. The ultimate decision is made by the Headmaster who assesses the overall burden of a student's workload.

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B.9 Learning Support Policy

Introduction and Aims

The primary aim of the Learning Support Department is to support the school in its core purpose of encouraging each pupil to achieve the highest standards possible and the greatest fulfillment from his/her particular academic skills and to focus also on the general educational principles which will support wider learning. The school respects the individuality of each pupil and is committed to helping pupils overcome any barriers to learning that they may encounter.

The Learning Support Department aims to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities and to assess, record, monitor and evaluate their progress to ensure that it is comparable to other pupils of the same age and ability. We believe that this involves a proactive partnership between learning support staff, other teaching and pastoral staff, parents, pupils and other professionals. We offer assessment and advice, plus individual and small group teaching for pupils experiencing difficulties. Intervention is planned and structured to meet individual need. Consultation with parents and pupils forms an important part of this process.

The Learning Support Department aims to look beyond exam success and consider how to engage and motivate learners and create in them an appetite to learn. Fostering the habits and attitudes that best support learning and developing the skills, which allow pupils to apply their knowledge, and understanding confidently are central to the work of the department. We believe that active learning, the ability to question and make connections and to review and assess one's own progress are essential learning skills and ones in which Learning Support pupils are frequently deficient.

The department considers that supporting teachers in their day-to-day roles within the classroom, communicating information about pupils and providing advice and training about the needs of particular learners is an important part of its work.

Context

The legal framework within which additional assistance is provided is set out in the SEN Code of Practice in the Education Act 1996 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The SEN Code of Practice states that "A pupil has a learning difficulty if he or she a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of pupils of the same age b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the pupil from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for pupils of the same age." Discrimination under the 2005 act can take place in two ways: a) treating a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably for a reason relating to his or her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply, without justification or b) failing to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their non-disabled peers without justification. This is known as the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

The school selects pupils for entry on the basis of their academic ability and breadth of interest. It is equipped to deal with mild learning difficulties but, due to the academic pace and the small size of the Learning Support Department, the school is not able to accommodate pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties.

There are currently 2 pupils in the school with statements of Special Educational Need. There are 98 other pupils in the school who are on the Learning Support Register. This includes pupils with indicators associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficits and obsessive compulsive disorder. Between 10 and 20 pupils per year qualify for special concessions in public examinations. Between 5 and 12 pupils per year are granted concessions to word process public exams.

Staff and Responsibilities

The person responsible for coordinating the provision of Learning Support in the three schools, which form the UCS foundation, is Robyn Spencer, the Director of Learning Support (DLS). She has regular meetings with the Learning Support teacher at the Junior Branch and the Senco at the Phoenix School. In the Senior School she reports to the Academic Deputy Head, Simon Marshall, over matters of learning strategy, with the Headmaster taking overall responsibility.

The responsibilities of the DLS in the Senior School are as follows:

- Overseeing the screening of all new pupils
- Drawing up and updating a Learning Support Register (LSR)
- Coordinating provision for pupils on the LSR
- Maintaining the records of pupils on the LSR
- Conducting annual reviews of pupils on the LSR
- Liaising with and advising the parents of pupils on the LSR
- Providing tutorial sessions for individual pupils
- Communicating with and advising fellow teachers about individual need
- Supervising the use of laptops by certain pupils on the LSR
- Gaining permissions for access arrangements in exams and consulting with examinations officers over special arrangements for public examinations.
- Contributing to the in-house training of staff and the induction of new members of staff
- Liaising with external agencies (e.g. educational psychologists)

From September 2009 the DLS will be supported by one Learning Support Teacher, Tracey O'Neill, who has particular responsibilities for the Entry and Shell year groups. Her main focus is to support the organisation and literacy skills of pupils who have been identified as experiencing difficulties in these areas. She also assists in the screening of new pupils in Entry and Shell. Tracey works three days a week as a Learning Support teacher and two days a week as a Learning Support Assistant to one of our two statemented pupils. She also supervises the physiotherapy exercises of the other statemented pupil.

In addition a Learning Support Assistant, Mat Doran, has been appointed for the academic year 2009 to 2010, to work for three days each week with one of the statemented pupils.

Accommodation

The Learning Support Department has exclusive use of a spacious room accessed from the crypt. This is used by the DLS for individual support and for group sessions for pupils and for teachers. Tracey O'Neill has shared use of a room in the crypt near the Year Wardens of Entry and Shell. She holds some sessions in the Lower Library and some in classrooms as available. As part of our development plan we are seeking to find more suitable accommodation for Tracey.

Resources

The department has built up an extensive collection of printed resources and self-generated information and worksheets. It also has copies of schemes of work and of many of the standard textbooks used by pupils and an extensive range of assessment tools.

The department's annual budget currently stands at approximately £17,000. This covers homework diaries for all pupils within the school, plus teacher diaries as well as resources and consultancy for the department and the provision of typing courses for the Entry year group.

Outside Agencies

The department consults with Andrea Smollan (educational psychologist) once a term and may refer pupils to her for assessment. Sarah Geiger (educational psychologist) has also taken referrals and assisted with staff training.

Stephanie Egerton (teacher specialising in assessment of SpLD) undertakes the majority of our assessments to provide evidence for special access arrangements in public examinations.

Where problems in the visual system are suspected, referral is made to Simon Barnard & Associates (behavioural optometrists) or to the Institute of Optometry at the Elephant & Castle.

Referrals have also been made to Maximum Potential (a pediatric occupational therapy practice) the LearnWrite Centre in Nottingham, which specializes in retraining handwriting and the New Learning Centre in West Hampstead which gives advice and training in matters related to learning and parenting.

Identification

Our policy is to screen all new pupils, at whatever age they enter the school, in order to identify literacy weaknesses and highly discrepant scores which might be indicators of a learning difficulty.

English as an Additional Language

The school aims to provide equality of access to the curriculum for all its pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language. It aims to ensure that the

language and learning needs of all pupils are identified and that they are supported in overcoming any obstacles that might prevent them from achieving their full potential.

The term EAL is normally used to describe pupils who have experienced less than two years schooling in an English-speaking environment. The number of UCS pupils for whom this is the case is very small. For those who are in this position their main need is the development of specialized, subject-specific vocabulary. In the year 2009-2010 we have one EAL pupil who entered the Transitus year group in September to study Maths, Physics and ICT.

We have no specialist EAL unit or EAL teacher, but are prepared to arrange and fund specialist provision tailored to individual need.

Information about EAL pupils entering the school is passed by the admissions secretary to the pupil's Deme Warden and Form Teacher and to the Director of Learning Support.

The screening tests taken by all new pupils in the first half of the Autumn term, and in particular the Edinburgh Reading Test 4, are helpful in identifying levels of need for EAL pupils.

- Where an EAL need is identified the pupil is added to the Learning Support Register so that all teachers are clearly informed of the need.
- Arrangements are made for the use of extra time and the use of bi-lingual dictionaries in tests and exams.
- Advice is provided to teaching staff on strategies that may benefit the pupil.
- Teachers provide time for one-to-one sessions outside normal lesson time to help to check understanding and provide additional explanations.
- The pupil is placed on 'Update reporting' to ensure very regular feedback on his/her progress.
- The pupil has regular mentoring sessions with learning support to ensure that his/her needs are being met.
- Access to a specialist EAL teacher is arranged by the school, as the need arises.

Transition from the UCS Junior Branch

The DLS has access to data used for tracking all pupils in the Junior Branch and makes use of this data when pupils transfer to the Senior School. The Learning Support files of pupils in Year 6 at the Junior Branch who have received individual help, or are on the Junior Branch Learning Support Register, are passed to the DLS during the second half of the summer term. This information is shared with the Entry Warden. The parents of those on the register are contacted and these pupils are placed on the Senior School register for the following year.

Admission of New Pupils

Feeder schools are asked to give details of any special learning requirements when supplying information to support an application to UCS. To qualify for extra time and/or the use of a word processor in entrance exams UCS requires a statement of support from the pupil's current school and evidence from an appropriately qualified professional (specialist teacher or educational psychologist).

The parents of new pupils entering the school are asked to give details of any special need or disability which might affect learning, on their registration forms. Where relevant these are passed to the DLS by the admissions secretary. The parents are contacted and, where appropriate, they are added to our Learning Support Register.

Screening

All new pupils are screened for specific learning difficulties during the first half of the term in which they enter the school. As part of our development plan, we are investigating the possibility of screening pupils earlier as part of their induction process. Parents are informed about the procedure by letter and where a pupil's profile shows unusual features, they are invited to a meeting to discuss possible courses of action.

All new pupils take the ***Edinburgh Reading 4*** test. The test gives a breakdown of scores for skimming, vocabulary, reading for facts, understanding points of view and comprehension. Pupils with a reading age of below 13 years are provided with a minimum of 10 sessions of individual support to improve their reading comprehension. Entry boys with low overall scores are invited to join an early morning reading group, which meets weekly from the second half of the Autumn term to the first half of the Summer term. The reading scores for Entry pupils are distributed to the Entry Warden and to the relevant members of the English and History departments. This test is also used to help identify pupils whose first language is not English.

All new pupils in Entry and Lower Remove sit the ***MidYIS test***. The test is comprised of four parts: Vocabulary, Maths, Non-verbal and Skills (accuracy and attention to detail), plus an overall score. Significant discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal scores are noted as possible indicators of dyspraxia. Significant discrepancies between verbal and skills scores are possible indicators of dyslexia.

Pupils up to the age of 16 take the ***LASS Secondary*** computerised assessment. This is an eight-part test designed to identify pupils with symptoms on the dyslexia spectrum. The assessment takes about 45 minutes and a standardized graphical profile is produced.

Pupils of 16+ take the ***LADS*** computerised assessment. This is a four part adult test designed to indicate the presence of dyslexic symptoms.

Results of the above screening tests are scrutinised with the aid of an educational psychologist. Information from all the above tests is used in the creation of Learning Support Profiles in SIMS.

Raising Concerns and Making Referrals

All staff are encouraged to discuss their concerns about the learning effectiveness of individual pupils with the DLS, or pass on concerns raised by parents. The progress of Learning Support pupils is a brief agenda item in all department meetings and a fuller agenda item once each half term. The DLS attends a meeting with each department once a year.

Concerns may be raised because a particular aspect of the pupil's learning may be out of line with the rest of their abilities and progress. Lack of learning confidence, low

motivation, poor behaviour and lack of focus are all legitimate reasons for raising concerns.

A *referral* to Learning Support is made by putting these concerns to the DLS in writing and, where appropriate, attaching samples of work. The majority of referrals come from Deme and Year Wardens who have an overview of the progress of pupils in their care.

Sixth Form pupils may self-refer to Learning Support. This is usually done on the advice of a Deme Warden or Sixth Form tutor.

The school counselor makes referrals to Learning Support where she judges that a pupil's learning competence or confidence is causing significant anxiety.

A referral will trigger an *information gathering* process involving a scrutiny of screening information and of reports, plus discussions with the pupil, a parent and a Warden.

This will result in either further monitoring or the creation of a Learning Support Profile and inclusion on the Learning Support Register (see page 11). Agreement for these actions is sought from parents and pupils and the level of support is discussed.

Support from Teachers

The primary level of support comes from subject teachers. They are encouraged to privately acknowledge areas of difficulty highlighted in the Learning Support Profiles. They are also expected to accommodate individual learning differences in class by using their department's recommended differentiation strategies and those listed in the Staff Learning Support Handbook. In addition to this, many staff give individual consultations to pupils, outside normal lesson times, to help them overcome difficulties they are encountering with particular pieces of work.

Form teachers and Deme and Year Wardens provide some extra monitoring (through report cards and update reports) and support for pupils who experience difficulties with organization and establishing productive learning habits.

Individual Support

Some pupils on the Learning Support Register will also require periods of individual learning support. This is planned with parents and pupils following initial screening and annual reviews and is provided free of charge.

A small number of pupils opt to do nine rather than 10 GCSEs and to have regular weekly individual sessions throughout the GCSE course.

In general individual support is offered for a limited number of sessions (up to 10 in a series), which occur at weekly, fortnightly or half-termly intervals.

A number of students at GCSE or above come for one-off consultations on the advice of a subject teacher or Warden.

Pupils in Entry, Shell and Lower Remove are withdrawn from class according to a rotating timetable. Older pupils from Remove upwards are normally seen in free periods, before or after school, or at lunchtime.

A series of sessions focuses on improving a particular skill set such as planning or editing written work, organisation and time management, taking notes, listening and following instructions, asking and answering questions and learning for tests and exams. Wherever possible material in these sessions relates closely to work the pupil has done recently, or will do in the near future to aid the transfer of skills to work in subject areas.

The sessions are based on a 'coaching' approach, which seeks to bring about change and development through questioning, emphasising strengths, and building intrinsic motivation and stamina for learning. Pupils are encouraged to set their own goals and targets and where appropriate these are shared with the relevant teaching staff.

The concerns and wishes of pupils are given a very high priority at every stage of learning support intervention. They are consulted during the information gathering stage and in the review process. They are encouraged to develop a good understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses and to develop effective strategies for overcoming their weaknesses.

Group Support

In the academic year 2008-9 a reading group was set up for pupils in the Entry with a low reading age (below 13 years). This met on Thursday mornings in the Lower Library and Remove pupils, doing the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, acted as reading mentors to the younger boys, helping them choose books, listening to them read and discussing their reading with them. When the Entry boys were retested in the summer term all but one of them had made gains in terms of reading age of between one and three years. This group will be continued in the next academic year.

In addition to the above group, Tracey O'Neill will run Guided Reading Groups for pupils in Entry and Shell starting in Autumn 2009. She will also be running an after school homework group for pupils in the Lower School who struggle to establish good homework habits.

Learning Support Registers

The main instrument by which staff are informed about which pupils experience learning difficulties is the Learning Support Register. This is issued to all staff in the Staff Learning Support Handbook at the beginning of the academic year. This is updated in November, January and April and redistributed to all staff.

Learning Support Profiles

Each pupil on the Learning Support Register has a Learning Support Profile created in the SIMS administration system and updated annually. Teachers are required and encouraged to access the profiles of those pupils on the register whom they teach, via the 'Linked documents' button. (As the process of accessing these documents has proved somewhat cumbersome, several departments have opted to keep hard copies in their department offices. A solution to this problem is being sought with the Director

of ICT and the SIMS administrator). The profiles contain information about a pupil's assessment history, details of any individual support received, the pupil's view, the parent's view and advice about their learning needs.

Staff Learning Support Handbook

This is a booklet, issued to all staff at the beginning of the academic year. It contains the latest Learning Support Register, information about staff responsibilities and advice about addressing common problems associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficits.

Responsibilities of Teaching and Pastoral Staff

Subject teachers have a responsibility to:

- Note which pupils are on the Learning Support Register, highlight their names in mark books and check their Learning Support Profiles in SIMS.
- Discuss any concerns they have about the level of attainment, progress or engagement of their pupils with the DLS, as necessary.
- Complete update reports, commenting on specific areas, as requested.
- Plan and deliver lessons and mark work with the needs of Learning Support pupils in mind, using the advice sections in the Staff Learning Support Handbook as guidance.

Heads of Department have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that department policies and handbooks contain subject-specific guidance on how to support pupils with specific difficulties.
- Ensure that all department members follow the guidance given.
- Monitor the progress of Learning Support pupils in their subject area.
- Include Learning Support pupils as a short agenda item in each department meeting and a longer agenda item once each half term.
- Arrange a meeting of their department with the DLS once a year.
- Suggest and consult over any training deemed necessary.

Form teachers have a responsibility to:

- Note which members of their form are on the Learning Support Register.
- Read their Learning support Profiles in SIMS.
- Pass on relevant information from parents to the DLS.
- Attend Learning Support meetings as requested.
- Monitor and help to support selected Learning Support pupils through report cards and extra support with organisation.

Home and Year Wardens

- Share concerns about pupils' level of attainment, progress, behaviour and motivation and agree action with the DLS.

Observation

In cases where focus in class, concentration and attention are the prime areas of difficulty, weekly classroom observation, followed by coaching and target-setting will be trialed from September 2009.

Examinations

Attention is given during individual sessions to revision, exam and test taking techniques. In the second half of the summer term time is spent with individual pupils analysing and reviewing exam technique and setting future targets. In addition Robyn Spencer provides training in revision and exam technique for specified pupils on request from Form teachers and Deme Wardens. A half-day revision workshop, open to all Upper Remove pupils, is held at the end of the Spring term.

If it is judged that a pupil may be eligible for a time concession in public examinations, his parents are contacted in the summer term before the start of the GCSE course and advised about procedures for assessment. Assessment for examination concessions is not carried out within school, but referred to appropriately qualified outside agencies. Candidates who are awarded extra time are advised about how to use it in exams. Extra time is awarded in internal school exams to pupils whose reading, writing and processing speed and accuracy are judged to qualify them for concessions in public exams.

If a pupil has an external assessment of special need, or a parent has concerns that their son or daughter may be eligible, the school asks that evidence is provided at *the beginning* of the GCSE, AS or A2 course. Parents are alerted to this requirement during the process of making subject choices and responses are passed to the DLS. The school is required by the examination boards to monitor the progress of pupils with special learning needs throughout their courses and to vouch for their eligibility. Late requests for special concessions are not acceptable to the boards.

Use of a Laptop Computer

Some pupils with specific learning difficulties may find it beneficial to use laptops for classwork and examinations. In order to use a laptop in school it is our policy that pupils have an assessment, which formally establishes the need. The pupil needs to have a typing speed at least equivalent to their writing speed. Advice on typing courses is provided by the department. Word processing in public exams must be approved by the DLS.

Annual Reviews

Pupils on the Learning Support Register are reviewed as follows:

- Transitus and Sixth Form – first half of Autumn Term
- Shell – first half of Spring Term
- Upper Remove – second half of Spring Term
- Remove and Lower Remove – second half of Summer Term

Each review comprises a scrutiny of reports + exam results, plus discussion separately with the pupil, a parent and the Deme or Year Warden, resulting in an update of the Learning Support Profile.

Examination Results

It is now department policy to compare the public exam results of pupils on the Learning Support Register with their MidYIS results, as a means of evaluating the

work of the department. This comparison indicates that on average pupils on the LSR achieve at least as highly as their peers in public exams and generally well beyond their MidYIS predictions.

Exam results for Maths and English are given to the DLS at the end of the Summer term to help with progress monitoring and the planning of interventions for the following year. The collating of complete sets of exam results in the summer term is an area currently being reviewed and developed.

Reporting, Feedback and Reviews

The DLS has access to the reporting system in SIMS and can add pupils from the LSR to the list for *Update Reports* at any time. Update reports provide feedback on pupils at roughly three-weekly intervals. All pupils on the LSR receive the first update report of the year. Thereafter they can be added to the list as necessary.

The Wardens contribute information to the annual reviews. There is frequent communication of pupil information both informally (usually before school in the mornings) and formally in the Pastoral Committee Meetings.

Aside from the more formal feedback in reports and department meetings, there is much informal feedback from teaching staff, particularly within the English department. Meetings are held with the Second Head of English and the Head of Maths at least 3 times per year, in addition to the annual meeting with each whole department.

Meetings

The DLS has weekly meetings with the Academic Deputy Head and separately with the Head of PSHE. She also has meetings at least each half term with the school counselor. She also attends all meetings of the Academic Board (Heads of Department) and of the Pastoral Committee (Deme & Year Wardens and Heads of Sixth Form). Meetings are held in the Learning Support Room with each subject department once a year to discuss matters of mutual interest. The DLS also has opportunities to make brief contributions to whole school staff meetings.

Training

The DLS holds a meeting for all new members of staff at the start of each year to explain the duties of staff in relation to learning support pupils. The annual meetings with departments also provide opportunities for discussing pupil needs and support strategies.

Whole staff training on matters related to Learning Support are organised approximately once each year and training targeted at particular departments have also been arranged. (see development plans).

Evaluating the Work of the Department

The work of the department is regularly reviewed in weekly meetings, plus an annual plenary, with the Academic Deputy Head. Whole school review with a member of the senior management team takes place every three years, the last one being in February 2008.

Communication with Parents

The Learning Support Department recognizes that parents have a vital role to play in the identification and support of pupils with learning difficulties.

New parents are provided with a Learning Support Information Sheet which sets out how Learning Support works at UCS. They are also informed by letter of the school's screening policy and invited in to discuss the results, should they reveal an unusual pattern of strengths and weaknesses.

Parents with concerns about a pupil's academic progress should raise them initially with the pupil's Form Teacher or Deme/Year Warden. If appropriate these concerns will be shared with Learning Support.

Parents views are used to help build a Learning Support Profile and to review it. They may be invited for meetings with the DLS and other staff to discuss their son's progress. They can also contact the DLS by phone or email for advice about how to support their child's progress or for information about outside agencies which may be helpful.

Parents of pupils who may be eligible for special arrangements in public exams are contacted by letter and advised of the necessary procedures.

Enrichment

The Learning Support Department is committed to contributing to the wider academic agenda of the school in the following ways:

- Hosting and chairing the 'Cosmos' lunchtime discussion clubs for the middle and lower school. These are run according to 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) guidelines developed by *Sapere*. They are well attended, tending to attract the more academically ambitious pupils in each year group. Pupils from the Transitus and Sixth form frequently return to chair or contribute to the group discussion.
- Encouraging a culture of reading within the school through collaborating with the library on projects such as the 'Entry Reading challenge' and holding an early morning reading group to encourage the weaker readers in the Entry.
- Collaborating with the Head of PSHE to develop an awareness of study skills throughout the lower and middle school.
- Running revision workshops for the Upper Remove to increase the confidence and efficiency with which they prepare for public exams.
- Running a homework club for the lower school to encourage the development of positive homework habits.

Links with the UCS Junior Branch and Phoenix School

Robyn Spencer attends the weekly Monday morning staff meeting at the Junior Branch and follows this by a meeting with Sarah Miller (Learning Support Coordinator at the Junior Branch). She is also frequently invited to parent/teacher meetings for pupils in Year 5 and 6 and kept fully informed of the progress of pupils receiving individual learning support sessions.

Robyn Spencer visits the Phoenix School at least twice each term and consults over any pupils causing concern and advises on the use of outside agencies.

Learning Support Policy across the three schools of the UCS foundation is developed collaboratively in order to provide a similar standard of care and a seamless transition between schools.

Child Protection

The Learning Support Department takes full account of the school's Child Protection Policy and refers any matters of concern to the Pastoral Deputy Head, who is the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The department is fully aware of the protocols for working with individual pupils and recognizes that this confers a particularly important role in the identification and reporting of child protection matters.

Use of ICT

The Learning Support Department is fully committed to the use of IT to enhance pupils' learning. We use electronic programs as part of our screening procedures; we encourage pupils who have the appropriate assessments to use laptops as their normal way of working in school and take steps to ensure that they are used in such a way as to support efficient learning; we encourage pupils to use the school's VLE and plan to upload material to it ourselves; we are exploring the use of software programs to promote good note taking. (See development plan).

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints about special needs provision in the school should be addressed, in the first instance, to the DLS. She will arrange a meeting to discuss the issues and inform senior management.

The school will make any adjustments which are deemed reasonable to ensure that a pupil with learning difficulties or disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage. However, in some cases it may not be possible to accommodate a proposed adjustment, for example if the cost greatly outweighs the benefit.

If an individual believes that a decision under this policy has not been made correctly, they may appeal in the first instance to the Headmaster. The individual should set out in writing the grounds for their appeal and this should be sent to the Headmaster. The individual may be invited to attend a meeting at which the grounds for the appeal will be discussed. A further appeal may be made to the Board of Governors and the individual may again be invited to attend a meeting at which the grounds for the appeal will be discussed. The individual will then be informed of the governors' decision in writing. The decision of the governors will be final and there will be no further right of appeal.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.10 Tracking

It is UCS policy to monitor carefully the academic development of all students as they progress through the school and to observe closely the different aspects of a student's learning at each stage of their development. The tracking system combines with the systems of assessment and reporting to provide a continual process of charting a student's development and as such we believe it is a key process in ensuring each student is fully supported and encouraged during their time in the school.

Tracking of student progress is an area where the academic and pastoral systems work very closely together. Throughout the school the primary overall responsibility for monitoring closely a student's overall day-to-day and month-to month progress lies with the Form Tutor and Deme Warden; each individual subject teacher is likewise responsible for a student's progress in their subject. Various forms of assessment data are available to the Form Tutor when a student arrives at UCS and during a student's time in the school an informal profile is gradually produced which charts a student's progress. In addition, the Learning Support Department uses baseline testing information (MidYis) in years 7 and 9, to provide further guidance in assessing a student's progress, identifying any particular learning needs and developing strategies to support them; UCS does not currently use MidYis as a fixed guide or means of setting arbitrary targets but instead uses it through the Learning Support department as a rough indicator of a student's strengths and weaknesses; the initial screening is used similarly. UCS, as a general rule, expects students to exceed their MidYis predictions and for this reason the information is not shared with the students or parents.

The principal formal mechanisms for tracking progress are the various forms of internal and external reports, which themselves result from test-results, class-work and homework in individual subjects; in the Sixth Form, there is student self-assessment in the form of Progress Reports in which student reflect on the progress they are making in each subject. Some individual departments have formalised their own procedures for tracking student progress in the form of whole year-group tests or by collating scripts from internal examinations. Form Tutors work closely with their Lower School or Deme Wardens in working out strategies to deal with those students who are not making sufficiently good progress; they also consult closely with individual subject teachers and Heads of Department over individual students who are perceived or reported not to be making progress. All Form Tutors, Lower School and Deme Wardens, teachers and Heads of Department regard the personal relationship which is built up with the student as the key to successful tracking and monitoring of student progress and these various informal means of evaluating a student's progress provide a continual source of vital information to supplement that gained more formally.

UCS encourages a wide range of strategies for supporting students who are not making progress. The role of the Form Tutor and subject teacher is important in developing a trusting and frank relationship with a student and students are

encouraged at all levels of the school to become involved in working out the best strategies for them to make better progress through identifying strengths and weaknesses and areas of particular concern. Subject teachers and Form teachers aim to identify the areas where a student is not making progress and to try and understand possible reasons why a student is not making progress and to attempt to work out strategies to support the student.

Individual teachers and Form Tutors encourage students they see as not making appropriate progress to attend one-to-one tutorial sessions or small-group tutorials whenever they perceive that a student's learning may benefit – these take place either before school, at lunchtimes or after school and are usually run by the subject-teacher or Form Tutor. Supervised study classes take place each lunchtime and although these are mainly used for students who have failed to complete homework or a class assignment, they can also be used for students over whom there are more general concerns. Many individual departments run extra classes for those students who are not making good progress on a regular or occasional basis. Lower School and Deme Wardens, in consultation with Form Tutors and teachers also run extra tutorials and will meet regularly with students whose progress is causing concern. When a student continues to cause concern, the Form Tutor and Lower School or Deme Warden, will usually arrange a meeting with a student's parents and it is also at this stage that, depending on the nature of the concerns, the Director of Learning Support and/or the school counsellor may be consulted; additionally at this stage the Headmaster might be consulted and meet with a student either individually or along with their parents.

During the school year 2009-10 a Working Party will meet to identify ways in which the tracking and support of students can be more effective and consistent and will focus in particular on how the school can identify and work with the students who are generally underperforming but who are not significant cause for concern. In addition, the Working Party will look at ways in which the school might better use 'objective data', such as MidYis.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.11 Academic Discipline

It is school policy that the classroom teacher has the primary responsibility for the academic discipline of each class he or she teaches. The teacher should be confident in defining and maintaining clear, consistent expectations and standards of behaviour in each class; whilst the boundaries of acceptable behaviour will vary from subject to subject and from year to year, the teacher should establish boundaries inside and outside the classroom within which he or she feels comfortable enough to teach freely, imaginatively and effectively. The teacher should expect to establish and maintain an atmosphere conducive and appropriate for learning at all times; for instance, a teacher should never feel that it is inappropriate to demand silence from a class in order to create an effective atmosphere for learning. All teachers should ensure that they create an atmosphere in which they feel comfortable and able to teach effectively.

All teachers should be aware that whatever their experience and previous rapport with students, difficulties can arise unexpectedly; it is common for teachers under these circumstances to internalise and often avoid facing up to such difficulties, sometimes due to anxieties about their ability or fears of being judged harshly. It is the policy of the school that of all Heads of Department, senior members of staff and colleagues should be receptive and supportive to any teacher they see encountering difficulties and to be proactive in offering help or advice. Where such advice might potentially cause any conflict or disquiet, one of the Deputy Heads can be consulted in confidence. All teachers are free to request help with any of their classes at any time – help can range from observing other teachers of the same class, asking a Head of Department or senior member of staff to sit in on a lesson or to requesting further Inset or other training. It is essential that UCS is a school which does not tolerate or condone poor behaviour and poor working habits in the classroom or outside it; this is the common responsibility of the whole community.

Poor Behaviour

Since the majority of problems with a class arise from intermittent to persistent low level misbehaviour (such as chatting, answering back, inattention), the teacher should always try to identify the causes of such behaviour should it arise and take immediate steps to confront the student or students over any behaviour with which he or she is uncomfortable. Most students, when talked to in a constructive and firm manner, will be cooperative and the ideal resolution to any disciplinary situation is one in which the teacher can establish appropriate codes of behaviour through discussion with the student(s) on a one-to-one basis; in any such situation, the teacher must inform the student's Form Teacher, the Deme Warden or Lower School Warden and the Head of Department that an issue has arisen but that it has been resolved. If the teacher finds a student or group of students unresponsive to demands detailed guidance of procedures

and sanctions can be found in the *Guidelines on Academic Discipline* section of the Staff Handbook.

Poor Standards of Work

The two main areas of a student's work are: work completed in class and work done outside class. The main area where a student might be a cause for concern is in completing work set for homework. The teacher should set appropriate homework for the time allocated for the class and expect that it will be completed in the time set by the teacher (as long as the time allowed is reasonable). It must also be remembered that clarity and consistency are essential to be maintained by the teacher if a class is to develop effective attitudes to homework; for instance, work should not be set for the sake of merely setting a homework and all homework needs to have a clearly communicated purpose; any learning which is done for a test to be taken during a specific lesson should result in that test taking place in the designated lesson; homework tasks should not implicitly penalise those who have LS needs or work more slowly than others (such might be the situation where a homework is to finish off what was done in class).

Where a student is failing to work effectively or constructively in class, the teacher should, in the first instance, discuss with the student the reasons for their difficulty. Often discussion will reveal that a student has concentration difficulties, finds certain kinds of work challenging, that they are simply unmotivated or that they do not understand what is required of them. The most common way in which such problems manifest themselves is through poor behaviour (and all teachers should be careful when dealing with poor behaviour to assess the underlying reasons for it). It is sometimes the case though that some students find it very difficult to achieve anything during lessons. If a student fails to complete a homework or written task or is manifestly failing to work in a subject a number of options and sanctions are available to help the student to complete work; these are provided in detail in the document *Guidelines on Academic Discipline* which is to be found in the Staff Handbook.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.12 Academic Enrichment, Cross-Curricular Learning & Gifted and Talented

UCS believes that the formal subject-based curriculum and preparation for public examinations is not the only method of providing an exciting and stimulating educational experience and is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a wide range of enriching activities and opportunities to complement and supplement their classroom learning.

UCS has many activities and opportunities which provide intellectual 'enrichment' and cross-curricular learning for students of all abilities: many departments have clubs or societies for different year-groups which help to foster a love of learning for its own sake and nearly all departments organise trips or visits for those taking their subjects at some point during each year. The school runs one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging arts' festivals of its kind in the country and a huge number of interesting and stimulating speakers visit the school during Festival Week (there are a number of visiting speakers throughout the rest of the year too); the organisers of the Festival attempt to devise a programme which not only tries to challenge students' intellectual horizons but also tries to draw links between disparate subject areas. The school also hosts a Science Week, which devotes a week to different lectures, seminars and demonstrations on a variety of science-based topics. The school dedicates a three period session on a Friday afternoon for an Activities Programme for those in the Sixth Form, during which students can choose from a wide range of activities (some sporting, some cultural, some social and some practical). Cosmos is a programme of Middle School intellectual 'enrichment' which is open to all in a given year-group, is voluntary and takes place in lunch-hours once a week; it is based on the 'Philosophy for Kids' programme. The school also runs a great number of foreign trips each year, from language exchanges to sports and cultural tours.

Gifted and Talented

It is school policy not to restrict opportunities for enrichment from anyone in the school and we believe that, since we are an academically selective school, all our students have interests, skills and aptitudes which can benefit from further enrichment. A Working Party in 2008-9 concluded that UCS would benefit from further development of cross-curricular opportunities and from better coordination of its enrichment activities; as a result of this a member of staff has been appointed to coordinate enrichment for the school. During 2009-10 the Enrichment coordinator will be reviewing the enrichment provision for years 7-8 and in the sixth form and consider ways in which opportunities for cross-curricular learning can be further developed and better coordinated.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.13 Recruitment, Review & Professional Development

It is the policy of UCS to recruit intellectually ambitious, technically proficient and imaginative teachers as we believe that the learning of students is best directed, supported and encouraged by dedicated, talented and inspiring teachers. The process of recruitment of teaching staff and relevant support staff is most commonly driven by the needs of individual departments and as such Heads of Department and, along with the three deputies and the Headmaster, are closely involved at all stages. Although there are many criteria for a successful candidate and the school looks to recruit teachers who are able to contribute strongly to the cultural, administrative and sporting life of the school, the primary criterion is always on teaching ability and the specific needs of the relevant department or departments. In assessing teaching ability, the school also seeks to identify outstanding potential as well as current ability, and, depending on the particular needs of a department, might equally recruit experienced teachers as it might newly qualified teachers. As an organisation committed to equal treatment, the school does not see age or experience as a bar to potential recruitment but endeavours to find the best person to fit the specific demands of any given post.

The procedures for training and inducting new staff are flexible but comprehensive (according to the level of experience and position of the new member). The training of all teachers who join the school is supervised by the three deputy heads and a general programme of induction is coordinated by the Vice-Master; it is usual for Heads of Department to take specific responsibility for the induction of new members of their department but this position might equally be shared or delegated to an experienced member of a department. The induction of Heads of Department is overseen by the three deputies. The school follows government guidelines for the training and mentoring of newly-qualified teachers and, when, occasionally, an unqualified teacher is appointed, a specific, tailor-made programme is created for the teacher by the Head of Department and the Vice-Master. It is usual for all new members of staff to be observed by the Head of Department and to share mutual observation or team-teaching with other members of the department. In addition, all new members of staff are reviewed as part of the annual process of review.

From 2009 all members of the teaching staff will be reviewed each year by their head of department. The focus of the review is primarily on 'Teaching and Learning' matters and on professional development. The member of staff completes a form identifying issues to discuss and then meets with the head of department to talk through the year's work, issues related to teaching, progress of students, as well as discussing matters of professional development and the member of staff's wider responsibilities in the school. In addition to this, all members of the teaching staff are expected to undertake mutual lesson observation or team-teaching with another teacher in their department – the main focus here being again an issue related to teaching and learning. All members of the teaching staff are also required to fill in a report on their previous year's teaching and results in early September of each

academic year. All heads of department meet with the Deputy Head (Academic) in the Autumn Term and talk through the departmental reviews, the department's performance in public examinations and other related matters. This meeting also focuses on the professional development of the heads of department. This process of annual review is complemented by a triennial 'Whole-School Review'; this allows a member of staff to be reviewed by a senior member of staff and draws on the annual reviews as well as lesson observation by the senior member of staff and the head of department. Where appropriate, a member of staff can request a 'Whole-School Review' more frequently than every three years.

Although the review process is the most important mechanism through which a member of the teaching or support staff can raise issues regarding professional development and by which their Head of Department can monitor their development and advise the member of their department as to suitable courses or further training, there are many other ways in which professional development is encouraged and supported. The Inset budget is large and all staff are encouraged to identify suitable courses to attend. Although prolonged absence is not encouraged, the school is keen to support staff who wish to continue studying, who wish to take further professional courses or who wish to undertake some kind of training relevant to their existing role or to a possible future role. UCS not only seeks to provide opportunities for all teachers to develop the craft of teaching, it also looks to support teacher development by encouraging teachers to develop their academic, administrative, academic and extra-curricular abilities. UCS also recognises that from time to time teaching or support staff may benefit from additional support in the form of counselling and the part-time counsellor is available for short-term support or can advise on options for longer-term help.

There are three formal school Inset half-days during each school year. The programme includes statutory training requirements as well as opportunities for professional development (according to the priorities identified within the school development plan); these can be proposed by members of SMT or by members of the common room. The Insets also allow opportunities for focusing on a variety of aspects of teaching and learning or as well as on a variety of whole-school issues.

As part of the 2009 Development Plan the school aims to develop more structured ways of encouraging a culture of training and professional development as well as creating a culture of shared pedagogical practice and enquiry. This matter will be researched by a sub-committee of Academic Board during 2010.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.14 ICT for Teaching and Learning

It is UCS Policy to utilise ICT as effectively and imaginatively as possible in delivering interesting lessons, in developing the learning and skills of all students and in extending the ways in which different types of learners acquire knowledge and understanding.

The school is committed to developing and extending the uses of ICT in teaching and learning and sees as central to this process the training and development of its teaching and non-teaching staff. The school has recently appointed a member of staff as Director of Digital Strategy for Teaching and Learning. In the first instance, the Director will coordinate the training and development of ICT within academic departments and among the teaching support staff and will provide a bridge between IT Support and the day-to-day use of ICT in the classroom. An ICT Committee has recently been formed, whose members consist of the Deputy Head (Academic), the Director of Digital Strategy for Teaching and Learning, the Technical Services Manager, the SIMS Manager and representatives from the academic and support staff. The Director works with heads of department in determining ICT needs for departments, as well as coordinating the training and development of personnel within departments, either through individual or small group training sessions, or through larger scale internal Insets. ICT budgets are not funded from department budgets but each Head of Department submits their requests for the following academic year during the Spring Term. In 2009-10 much focus will be given towards developing staff and student use of the VLE and on developing a rolling programme of staff training.

Section B: Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

B.15 The School Library, Information Support & Independent Learning

The school library plays a vital and dynamic role in fostering a love of wide reading, in supporting the acquisition of academic research skills and in developing more general information literacy. The Head of Library and the Assistant Librarian are full-time and there is a Library Assistant who works term-time only. All students who join the school (at any level) are given a series of introductory sessions in which they are shown how to make best use of the wide variety of resources in the school library. From 2009-10, all Transitus students will have further sessions, during which they will be given more advanced advice on academic research skills. The library now runs a reading scheme for the Entry year which it will develop as that cohort moves through the school; this aims to complement and extend the current 'core reading' scheme, run by the English Department. The library is open from 8am until 5pm and is usually open for one or more weeks of the Easter vacation.

Although there is no official school 'policy' focusing on Independent Learning, it lies at the heart of the school ethos and its aim to create a culture of academic and intellectual excellence. The pastoral and academic structures actively encourage students to take responsibility for their learning; the gradual training of students to exercise choices wisely through conversation, discussion and reflection is founded on the principle of developing independence of mind and action. The PSHE programme forms an integral part of this process and in particular the role of the Form Teacher (where possible) in delivering this. The frequent opportunities for discussion, self-assessment and reflection as a student progresses through the school are designed to underpin the less formalised structures which support independent learning. No less important to the development of high academic aspirations is the role of teachers in providing effective role models and the commitment of the school to encouraging further study and professional development plays a subtle part in the process of maintaining and developing an academic and intellectual culture.

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B.16 Higher Education and Careers

It is UCS policy to provide an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. In accordance with these aims the school aims to ensure that support and advice is provided both at key moments of decision-making in a student's time at UCS and throughout their time in the school. As nearly all our students will go on to higher education, the principal focus of advice and support is geared towards preparation for higher education, however, we endeavour also to offer suitable advice and support for post-A Level careers which may not involve attending higher education. The emphasis of our advice and support is on encouraging our students to make effective and productive choices which balance short-term interests with long-term possibilities.

The Head of Careers and an Assistant Head of Careers oversee careers guidance and they work closely with the Senior Tutors and the PSHE Coordinator in preparing students for higher education and beyond. Preparation for this begins in the Lower School, where the initial discussion of careers and higher education is delivered through the PSHE programme, and it is during the Middle School that the formal careers programme begins. The school encourages all students to seek some form of work-experience, in the Lower Remove and particularly in the Transitus (mainly in the summer vacation between the Transitus and Sixth Form years). In the Upper Remove, the Morrisby assessment tests form the basis for a series of interviews which are aimed at complementing the advice of Form Tutors, Deme Wardens and subject teachers in helping students make suitable subject choices for A Level. The school also seeks to ensure that parents become actively involved in the preparation of students for life after UCS.

The preparation of the students in the Sixth Form for higher education forms a key part of the T7 Programme and this is coordinated by the Senior Tutors, with the help of the relevant Form Tutors. The process of university application is supervised by the Senior Tutors and they ensure that all relevant staff are involved in preparing students with UCAS applications, for university entrance and aptitude tests and with specialist Oxbridge and Extension Classes. The specific preparation of students for Oxbridge and for applications to particularly competitive courses at university is coordinated by individual heads of department, with the Senior Tutors assisting in subject areas not covered by UCS academic departments.