

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL

Statements of School Policy & Practice (2011-2012)

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

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 also tries to ensure 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 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 our 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 school is currently piloting a number of enrichment initiatives which extend our already broad curriculum and are aiming to provide an even more intellectually demanding and exciting academic experience at UCS – details of these can be found in Section B12.

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 or her 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.3 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, since September 2009, a pilot 'enrichment' lesson has been offered, called Ideas, which provides both skills-based and subject-based enrichment.

In the Shell (year 8), the three sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, are taught separately. During 2011-12 ICT will be taught through one of the Mathematics lessons for one period a week in the Shell for three of the Forms; in the other Form we are piloting a continuation of Ideas with a view eventually to extending the Ideas programme for one period a week into the Shell.

As some boys joining the Lower School have not previously studied French, this is taught in sets for both the Entry and Shell years, 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 might find studying a third language particularly challenging, 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 this is supported 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 the Sixth Form Management Team coordinate the T7 and Six1 programmes 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. From September 2010, we have continued this period into the Sixth Form year and it allows for further support and preparation time for university applications but also for a diverse range of talks and extended assemblies (as it takes place on Friday period 1).

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). From 2010-11 UCS has been piloting two AS Levels to be delivered as part of the Activities Programme: the EdExcel Extended Project (for two small groups of students, around 20 in total) and Film Studies (for a single group of 7 students); the Extended project is delivered during the three terms of Activities Programme (two during the Transitus and one in the Sixth Form) and Film Studies operates for two terms with the option – for those who wish to take the exam – of further sessions during the summer term of the Transitus year. During 2011-12 we are reviewing the timetable for the Transitus and Sixth Form years in order to identify a dedicated block in the week for future development of such enrichment projects. 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.

[Policy reviewed and updated 4th September 2011]

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B.4 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. From 2010 we have begun to make the homework set for each subject available on the UCS VLE. During 2011-12 we will be developing ways of ensuring that all students have access to homework via the VLE, with particular focus on the Lower and Middle Schools; all teachers will be required to provide some form of homework task on the VLE and parents will be able to gain access to the VLE and to see the homework tasks which have been set.

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 impact adversely on the students' learning in other subjects. In addition, it may be the case that for extended pieces of work (such as in preparing for controlled assessment), homework is set over a number of weeks, rather on a nightly basis; in such cases, the VLE will be used to communicate clearly the teachers' expectations to their students. Likewise, it may also be the case that, during a period of controlled assessment, no homework can be set in a subject (as is currently the case with Geography GCSE). Where this is the case, clear guidance is given to students as to what is expected from them.

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.

During 2011-12 the school will be reviewing the quality, quantity and consistency of the homework which is set by departments through the Teaching and Learning Development Group.

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B.5 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.

Following discussions at Academic Board during 2011, it was decided to develop a Whole School English Policy which would be refined and piloted during 2011-12; the aim of this is to create a system of notation common to all academic departments in order to ensure better communication of teachers' expectations to students.

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B.6 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.

Between January and June 2011, the school piloted a process of tracking student progress in one Shell Form and from September 2011 this pilot is being extended to the Entry and Lower Remove years, whilst this will not substantially alter the current method of reporting to parents, it will shift the focus of internal reporting and encourage clearer communication between the Academic and Pastoral systems.

[Policy reviewed and updated 4th September 2011]

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B.7 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 or she chooses to study at AS level. In practice, however, AS level choices are carefully monitored by form teachers, Deme Wardens, the Sixth Form Management Team and Heads of Departments, and students are 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.8 Learning Support Policy

Introduction and Aims

Within the broader context of supporting and encouraging wider learning, 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 to gain the greatest fulfillment from his/her particular academic skills. 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 specific educational needs or disabilities and to collaborate with all staff in the provision support for learning. In keeping with whole school policy, the department assesses, records, monitors and evaluates pupils' progress in order 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. The department offers assessment and advice, plus individual and small group teaching for pupils experiencing difficulties. Intervention is planned and structured to meet the particular needs of individual pupils. Consultation with parents and pupils forms an important part of this process.

The Learning Support Department aims to look beyond exam success and to consider how to engage and motivate learners and to create in them an appetite to learn. Fostering the habits and attitudes that best support learning and developing the reflective and metacognitive 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 all essential learning skills.

The department considers that a collaborative approach towards support for learning is a key component of its provision and, therefore, aims to support teachers in their day-to-day roles within the classroom, communicate information about pupils and provide advice and training about the needs of particular learners.

Legal Context for the Provision of Support

The School subscribes to the ethos and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and actively seeks to eliminate discrimination in all forms and to advance equality of opportunity. It seeks to ensure that all pupils with specific learning difficulties or disabilities are as fully integrated into the life of the School and its educational programmes as is possible, with all reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage having been made.

Under the Equality Act (2010), a person is deemed to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect upon their ability to perform normal day to day activities. 'Substantial' is considered to mean more than minor or trivial and 'long term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least twelve months.

Under the act, discrimination can take the form of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and discrimination arising from, or as a consequence of, a disability.

All staff are, therefore, required to maintain an up to date awareness of pupils' individual learning needs and to cater proactively for students' specific learning difficulties or disabilities.

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 103 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 their work in public examinations.

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 which might prevent them from achieving their full potential.

The term EAL is normally used to describe pupils who have either lived or been taught in an English-speaking environment for less than two years. The number of UCS pupils for whom this is the case is generally very small. The main need for pupils for whom English is an additional language is to develop specialized, subject-specific vocabulary and an academic style of writing. In the year 2011-2012, prior to the new screening results, we have do not any EAL pupils.

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 Head 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 examinations.
- Advice is provided to teaching staff on strategies which 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 the Head of 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.

Staff and Responsibilities

The person responsible for coordinating the provision of Learning Support in the three schools, which form the UCS foundation, is Susan Thale, the Head of Learning Support (HLS). 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 HLS 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 individual tutorial support for pupils
- Communicating with and advising fellow teachers about pupils' individual needs
- 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 HLS has been supported by one Learning Support Teacher, Tracey O'Neill, who, in addition to her role as Coordinator of PSHE, 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.

In addition, a Learning Support Assistant, Adam Spensley, has been appointed for the academic year 2011 to 2012, primarily to work for two hours each day 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 HLS for individual support and for group sessions for pupils and for teachers. Tracey O'Neill has exclusive 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.

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 plus 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 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.

Support for Pupils - Identification

The identification of need for additional support begins with the entry procedures.

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 examinations, 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 the registration forms. Where relevant, these are passed to the HLS by the Admissions' Secretary. The HLS will contact parents to discuss their child's needs and, where appropriate, the pupil's name and details will be added to the Learning Support Register.

Transition from the UCS Junior Branch

The HLS 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 HLS 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 Learning Support Register.

Whole School Initial Assessment and Screening

All new pupils undertake a series of screening tests and assessments at whatever age they enter the school. Information from the tests is used to identify areas of strength and possible weaknesses. In particular, significant discrepancies between tests are noted as possible indicators of specific difficulties which may affect aspects of learning.

The Tests

All new pupils in Entry and Lower Remove sit the *MidYIS test* which has been developed by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at the University of Durham.. The test is comprised of four parts: Vocabulary, Maths, Non-verbal and Skills (accuracy and attention to detail), plus an overall score. The tests are designed to measure ability and aptitude for learning and provide baseline data which is used to track and monitor progress as well as to inform the nature of any specific support which may be required.

In addition, pupils up to the age of 16 take a computerized screening assessment, Lucid Assessment System for Schools (*LASS Secondary*) which is designed to give a summary of core cognitive skills and attainment levels in reading and spelling. The test is useful in identifying pupils who may have a specific learning style, such as dyslexia. The assessment is comprised of eight-sub-tests and takes about 45 minutes. A standardized graphical profile is produced which enables areas of strength and weaknesses to be identified.

Pupils of 16+ take the Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening Test (*LADS*); this is a computerised assessment which is comprised of four tests which provide a summary of key cognitive skills such as working memory, non verbal reasoning and literacy achievements. The test results are also useful in identifying pupils with a specific learning profile such as dyslexia.

All new pupils also 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.

Scores for the LASS, LADS and Edinburgh Reading Tests are distributed to staff and information regarding the MidYIS results is available on the school's information and management system (SIMS).

Results of the screening tests are also discussed with an educational psychologist who is able to offer specialist advice regarding the best support for the particular needs of individual pupils.

Parents are informed about the assessment and screening process by letter and where a pupil's profile shows unusual features, the HLS will contact parents in order to discuss the results and possible courses of action. Pupils are also invited to discuss the results with the HLS.

Referrals from teachers, tutors or Wardens

All staff are encouraged to discuss their concerns about the learning effectiveness of individual pupils with the HLS, or to pass on concerns raised by parents. The progress of pupils and their support needs is a regular agenda item in all department meetings; where concerns are raised, these are communicated to the HLS by the relevant Head of Department or individual teacher. In addition, the HLS attends a meeting with each department once a year at which the progress of individual students and matters of strategy and support are discussed.

Concerns may be raised because a particular aspect of a pupil's learning may be out of line with the rest of his or her abilities and progress. Lack of learning confidence, low motivation, poor behaviour and lack of focus are all legitimate reasons for raising concerns.

A referral is made by communicating the nature of the concern to the HLS and, where appropriate, providing 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.

The school counsellor may also make referrals to the HLS where she judges that a pupil's learning competence or confidence is causing significant anxiety.

Sixth Form pupils may seek support from the Learning Support Department of their own accord, although referral is usually done on the advice of a Deme Warden or Sixth Form tutor.

Upon receipt of a referral, the HLS will gather further information, including the views of other teachers; review reports, test and examination results, screening and tracking data and invite the pupil to discuss his or her perception of the need for support. A plan of action will be agreed; this may take the form of support strategies being provided; the implementation of a process of monitoring and regular reviewing of progress, or a series of support meetings being established.

Where additional support is recommended, agreement will be sought from parents. Form Teachers and Wardens are informed; a Learning Support Profile is created and details of the pupil's need and support are placed on the Learning Support Register. There is no charge for additional support.

Individual Support Lessons

Learning support lessons are planned and structured to meet pupils' individual needs. At the start of each half term, a specific area of focus or target achievement is identified and agreed upon; progress towards this is monitored and reviewed at the end of each half term. Evidence of achievement might come from quantifiable data such as improved test scores or more qualitative responses in the form of teacher feedback on a pupil's progress.

Support programmes often have as their focus the improvement of 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 or learning for tests and exams. Wherever possible material or topics are designed to relate 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.

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.

In general, individual support lessons tend to be required for a short term period in order to enable a pupil to develop strategies to address a specific area of difficulty.

A small number of pupils who opt to take nine rather than 10 GCSEs will have regular, weekly individual sessions throughout their GCSE programme of study.

Some students, particularly at GCSE level and above, seek support on a 'drop in basis', often on the advice of a subject teacher or Warden, to address a specific problem or difficulty.

Pupils with a low average reading score are provided with a programme of individual support in order to improve their reading comprehension.

The concerns and wishes of pupils are given a very high priority at every stage of learning support process. 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 or circumventing specific areas of weaknesses.

Group Support

Tracey O'Neill runs Guided Reading Groups for pupils in Entry and Shell plus an after school homework group for pupils in the Lower School who struggle to establish good homework habits.

Learning Support Register and Handbook for Staff

The Learning Support Register is issued at the start of the academic year and updated each term. The register identifies the nature of pupils' learning difficulties, key areas of weakness, the level of support or need, examination concessions and access arrangements, plus brief suggestions for support. The Learning Support Register is also included in the Learning Support Handbook provided for staff which is issued at the beginning of the academic year. The handbook also contains information about staff responsibilities and more detailed suggestions for supporting learners with particular needs or specific difficulties.

Learning Support Profiles

Learning Support Profiles for pupils who are on the Learning Support register are available in SIMS. The Profiles include details of pupils' screening scores; strategies for support and summaries of reviews with both parents and pupils.

Support from Teachers

Teachers are required to be aware of which pupils are on the Learning Support Register and to have identified strategies to support their learning and well being both within a classroom and wider school context.

Teachers should accommodate individual learning differences in class by using their department's recommended differentiation strategies and those listed in the Staff Learning Support Handbook.

Many staff give individual consultations to pupils, outside normal lesson times in order to help them to overcome difficulties which they are encountering with particular pieces of work.

Form teachers and Deme and Year Wardens provide extra monitoring and support for pupils who experience difficulties with organization and establishing productive learning habits by means of the school's report cards and update reports.

Responsibilities of Teaching and Pastoral Staff

Subject teachers have a responsibility to:

- Note which pupils are on the Learning Support Register, highlight their names or annotate their mark books accordingly, and check pupils' Learning Support Profiles in SIMS
- Discuss any concerns they have about the level of attainment, progress or engagement of their pupils with the HLS, as necessary
- Complete update reports, commenting on specific areas, as requested
- Plan and deliver lessons and mark work with the needs of pupils' specific needs and difficulties in mind. The advice sections in the Staff Learning Support Handbook are offered 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
- Regularly discuss the needs and progress of pupils on the Learning Support register in Department Meetings
- Arrange a meeting of their department with the HLS 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 the Learning Support Profiles in SIMS

- Pass on relevant information from parents to the HLS.
- Attend Learning Support meetings as requested
- Monitor and help to support pupils through the use of report cards and by giving extra support with organisation.

Deme and Year Wardens should:

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

Lesson observations by the Head of Learning Support

As part of the process of enhancing teaching and learning, the Learning Support Department recognizes the value of observing classroom based lessons in order to extend and share good practice, support pupils in the development of their own learning skills and to increase knowledge and awareness of individual pupil's specific learning needs. The HLS welcomes the opportunity to observe teachers' lessons, particularly those in which pupils on the Learning Support Register are present.

Examinations

As part of pupils' preparation for examinations, revision, examination and test taking techniques are covered during individual learning support lessons. In the second half of the summer term time is spent with individual pupils analysing and reviewing examination techniques and setting future targets. In addition, Susan Thale provides training in revision and examination techniques 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.

Access Arrangements and Examination Concessions

If it is judged that a pupil may be eligible for a time concession in public examinations, his or her parents are contacted in the summer term before the start of the GCSE or A Level course and advised about procedures for assessment. Assessment for examination concessions is not generally carried out within school, but referred to appropriately qualified outside agencies. Candidates who are eligible for extra time are given advice regarding how to use the concession effectively. Candidates who are eligible for other examination concessions or access arrangements are advised of the procedures and regulations regarding their specific concession. All staff who are involved in the provision or supervision of specific concessions or access arrangements are also informed about the regulations regarding the arrangements.

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 had an external assessment indicating a specific need, or a parent has concerns that their son or daughter may be eligible for examination concessions, 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 HLS.

The school is required by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) to monitor the progress of pupils with specific learning needs throughout their courses and to vouch for a pupil's eligibility for examination concessions. Access arrangements and examination concessions have to reflect a pupil's normal way of working and to be catering for a specific need. The JCQ issues deadlines by which requests for access arrangements and examination concessions have to be made. Acceptance of late requests for concessions cannot be guaranteed.

Use of a Laptop Computer

Some pupils may find it necessary to use laptops for classwork and examinations. Any pupil who considers that they need access to a lap top for classwork and in examinations will be required to have a formal assessment in order to confirm their eligibility and need. A pupil's typing speed should be at least equivalent to their writing speed and the use of a word processing facility should not have an adverse effect upon the clarity of their expression. Advice on typing courses is provided by the department. Word processing in public exams must be approved by the HLS.

Examination Results

The Learning Support Department the examination results of pupils on the Learning Support Register with their MidYIS results, as part of the process of evaluating the work of the department. On average, pupils on the LSR achieve at least as highly as their peers in public examinations and generally well beyond their MidYIS predictions.

Performance in school examinations, particularly in English and Mathematics, is also scrutinized by the HLS in order to identify any pupils who may be in need of additional support.

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 and examination results, plus individual discussions with the pupil, a parent and the Deme or Year Warden. As a result of these reviews, information on a pupil's Learning Support Profile is updated.

Reporting, Feedback and Reviews

The HLS 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.

In addition to 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 Head of English and the Head of Mathematics at least three times per year, in addition to the annual meeting with each whole department.

Meetings

The HLS 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 counsellor. She 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 with each subject department once a year in the Learning Support Room to discuss matters of mutual interest. The HLS also has opportunities to make brief contributions to whole school staff meetings.

Training

The HLS 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 pupils' needs and possible strategies for support.

Whole staff training on matters related to Learning Support are organised approximately once each year and training for individual departments has also been arranged.

Evaluating the Work of the Department

The work of the department is regularly reviewed in weekly meetings, as well as in an annual plenary, with the Academic Deputy Head.

The work of the department is also appraised by ascertaining the perceptions and views of pupils who have received additional support, by feedback from teachers regarding the achievements of pupils on the Learning Support register and, quantitatively, comparisons between pupils' MidYIS test results and their performance in examinations are also used to monitor and evaluate the performance of the department.

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 and review a pupil's Learning Support Profile and parents may be invited to meet the HLS and other staff to discuss their son's progress. Parents can also contact the HLS by telephone 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 enhancing teaching and learning and the wider academic agenda of the school.

The HLS is a member of the Teaching and Learning Development Group and part of the 'Cosmos' lunchtime discussion clubs for the middle and lower school. These are run according to 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) guidelines developed by *Sapere*. The meetings are well attended and tend 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.

In addition, the HLS also supports the Debating Society.

The Department organizes revision workshops for the Upper Remove to increase the confidence and efficiency with which they prepare for public exams.

Tracey O' Neill runs an early morning homework club for the lower school to encourage the development of positive homework habits. As Co-ordinator of PSHE and a member of the Learning support team, Tracey is ideally placed to liaise work with the HLS and pastoral teams in the development of effective study skills throughout the lower and middle school.

Links with the UCS Junior Branch and Phoenix School

Susan Thale 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.

Susan Thale 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 an effective 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 its own efficiency and pupils' learning. We use electronic programs as part of our screening procedures and pupils are encouraged to use ICT to facilitate their organization and academic work. Pupils who have specific needs, slow or illegible handwriting are able to apply to use laptops as their normal way of working. We encourage pupils to use the school's VLE as an everyday resource and, in particular, to access details of homework tasks which have been set.

Complaints and Appeals

Complaints about the provision of Learning Support in the school should be addressed, in the first instance, to the HLS who will arrange a meeting to discuss the issues and inform a member of the Senior Management team. It is to be hoped that a resolution can be achieved by this means; however, 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.9 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 every 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 about 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 met to identify ways in which the tracking and support of students could more be effective and consistent and it focused in particular on how the school might identify and work with the students who are generally underperforming but who are not regarded as a significant cause for concern. In addition, the Working Party looked at ways in which the school might better use 'objective data', such as MidYis. The Working Party presented its findings to the Senior Management Team, the Common Room and the Education and HR Committee in the Summer Term 2010. It was agreed that the proposals outlined by the Working Party should be implemented in a pilot scheme to be launched in 2011. This pilot scheme focused on one Shell Form between January and June 2011; its success has meant that the pilot will be extended to the Entry and Lower Remove year-groups during 2011-12. Full details of the Pilot Tracking Scheme can be found in a separate appendix in the form of a booklet issued to all teaching staff in September 2011.

[Policy reviewed and updated 4th September 2011]

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

B.10 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. 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 set which simply asks the students 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*.

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

B.11 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. For many years the school has run 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 have visited the school during Festival Week (there are a number of visiting speakers throughout the rest of the year too); in place of Festival Week in November 2011 the school will host an Enrichment Week, during which departments will run a series of talks and events. These will be aimed at both broadening subject knowledge and creating links between disparate areas of study. During March of each year, 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. At the end of the summer term in 2010, the school piloted an ambitious Activities Week for the Entry to Remove years and for the Transitus – the activities included trips to notable institutions and museums, creative workshops, a trip to Belgium to tour the WWI battlefields as well as visits by authors; the school built on the success of this week of activities by developing it further in summer 2011. It is intended that this will become a permanent and vital element of the commitment of UCS to a wide variety of enrichment opportunities.

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 an Enrichment coordinator was appointed and reviewed in particular the enrichment provision for years 7-8 and in the sixth form; in addition he considered ways in which opportunities for cross-curricular learning can be further developed and better coordinated. As a result of these reviews, the pilot enrichment programme in the Entry year – 'Ideas' - revised and during 2010-11 was taught for 1 period a week to half-size sets (7 members of staff were involved in teaching this). During 2011-12 a continuation of this programme will be piloted in one form in the Shell year. From September 2010 the school has been piloting the EdExcel Extended Project for two small groups of students (delivered as an option during the Friday Afternoon Activities Programme). During 201-12, the timetable will be reviewed in order to see if space can be created specifically for such enrichment projects (including Film Studies AS, which is also being piloted during the Activities Programme in 2010-12) and in order that the Extended Project might be made more widely available.

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

B.12 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.

As part of the 2009 Development Plan the school aimed 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. As a result of this in 2010 a Professional Development Coordinator was appointed and during 2010-11 worked with the Deputy Heads and the Academic and Pastoral Heads to develop more coherent ways of developing, monitoring and delivering professional development for all teaching staff. As a result of this, the Professional Development Coordinator now oversees all aspect of training and induction of staff, as well as their continued professional development. He works closely with the three Deputy Heads.

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 coordinated by the Professional Development coordinator who works closely with the three deputy heads in developing a general programme of induction; 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, the Professional Development Coordinator 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.

Since 2009 all members of the teaching staff have been 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. The Professional Development Coordinator is closely involved in scrutinising staff review and uses the feedback generated by review to coordinate the professional development of staff.

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 the Professional Development Coordinator encourages all staff to identify suitable courses to attend. Staff are actively encouraged to disseminate information to relevant parties after attending thus maximising the impact of the external course within UCS. Teachers are also asked to evaluate their course enabling the PD coordinator (and the teacher themselves) to assess the merit of attending. 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. The practice of lesson observation is encouraged at all levels throughout the school and enables staff to share their ideas on teaching and learning. 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.

In recent years there have been three formal school Inset half-days during each school year. The programme has included statutory training requirements as well as opportunities for professional development (according to the priorities identified within the school development plan); since 2011, the Professional Development

Coordinator has overseen the provision of Inset and a formal programme of Insets has been developed for 2011-12. These Insets will provide opportunities for focusing on a variety of aspects of teaching and learning as well as on a variety of whole-school issues. An extra half day of training has been added to the programme allowing more opportunities for reflection and collaboration within the teaching body and will also give the possibility of developing a more holistic programme of Inset for the staff. In June 2011, Heads of Department were encouraged to use the "quiet" time (while years 11-13 are on study leave) for departmental professional development. A number of departments made use of this opportunity and use of this time will be developed further in June 2012.

A significant initiative is planned for 2011-12. Following on from a staff Inset during the summer term, the school is seeking to develop a more formal and comprehensive Teaching and Learning Policy and the Professional Development Coordinator, along with the Deputy Head Academic, will be recruiting a Teaching and Learning Development Group which will meet regularly during 2011-12. The Group will focus on both practicalities as well as theory and by examining and testing the best aspects of modern educational theory and practice will seek to develop the most appropriate guidelines for Teaching and Learning at UCS.

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

B.13 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. A particular focus for 2011-12 is to develop a formal Information Literacy programme to support students in making best use of ICT in their learning.

ICT and Students

It is school policy to try to equip our students with the ICT skills required to meet the demands of continued study and professional life and to enable students to use ICT to extend and develop the ways in which they learn; we aim to educate students to be confident both in using existing technology and also in acquiring new skills in what is a rapidly evolving area. We try to provide our students with the broadest possible experience of ICT by locating our training of ICT skills within traditional subject areas, so that ICT is seen as a tool rather than as an end in itself. Furthermore, it is our policy to ensure our students are protected from the risks associated with ICT; we promote safe use of the internet and ICT and aim to educate our students about the moral and social implications of ICT usage in our society and other cultures, both within the classroom and through the programme of morning assemblies.

ICT only appears in the core curriculum in years 7 and 8. Pupils who join the school after year 8 have their ICT skills audited and receive any necessary support through a programme of lunchtime sessions. In 2011-12 one Shell Form will receive no formal ICT teaching as an extension of the 'Ideas' programme is being piloted with that one form. Separate arrangements for ICT tuition for that form will be made.

During 2011-12 we are reviewing the Information Literacy skills necessary for A Level study in years 12 and 13 (with a particular focus on developing better research skills). The ICT and Library departments will be working to extend this into a formal Information Literacy programme at all levels of the school.

ICT and Staff

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 a Director of Digital Strategy for Teaching and Learning to coordinate the training and development of ICT within academic departments and among the teaching support staff and provides a bridge between IT Support and the day-to-day use of ICT in the classroom. An ICT Committee has 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. Much effort in the last two years has been devoted to developing staff and student use of the VLE and on developing a rolling programme of staff training. In addition, during 2011-12 we aim to develop better ways of using ICT to enhance communication throughout the UCS community.

[Policy reviewed and updated 4th September 2011]

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

B.14 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. In Entry, the induction sessions are given to individual classes; the Entry also benefit from the Book Trust's national programme "Booked Up" in which every Year 7 student in the UK gets a free book; this also ensures the classes return to the library for a story telling session at the end of the Autumn Term. In the Transitus, the year group receives an introductory session which is then followed by form group visits over the following few weeks.

Students are given further induction sessions that are subject specific during which they are given more advanced advice on academic research skills and these are given at the individual teacher's request. During the year, different subject areas schedule research projects for different year groups and the library supports these by teaching specific skills (e.g. evaluating websites for the Entry's Science project about Vegetarianism) as well as providing a carefully selected range of resources. Individual students are taught and supported on an individual basis according to need and with a view to enabling independence. For example, students undertaking English, History, Philosophy or the EPQ often require one to one support when learning to navigate the online resources that they are introduced to in the formal teaching sessions.

The library runs reading schemes for the Entry, Shell and Lower Remove year groups; these schemes aim to complement and extend the current 'core reading' scheme, run by the English Department. The library has expanded opportunities in the Entry and Shell by entering the school in the UK Kids Lit Quiz and running an internal Lit Quiz for each of these year groups. The library also hosts The Transitus & Sixth Book Group and the Poetry Society where sufficient student interest makes them viable. The library also provides an alternative venue for small groups to listen, meet and work with guest speakers in a more informal and interactive format.

The library is open from 8am until 5pm and is may be 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.

The school's recently created pilot Enrichment programmes (see Section B12) are a key element in the school's attempt to foster improved independent learning skills and from Sept 2011, part of the remit of the UCS Teaching and Learning Development Group, will be to explore further ways of helping our students to become much better independent learners.

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

B.15 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 oversees careers guidance and works closely with the Sixth Form Management Team 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 and Six 1 Programme and this is coordinated by the Head of Sixth Form, supported by the Deputy Heads of Sixth Form and with the help of the relevant Form Tutors. The process of university application is supervised by the Head of Sixth Form, supported by the Deputy Heads of Sixth Form and Assistant Heads of Sixth Form, 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 Sixth Form staff assisting in subject areas not covered by UCS academic departments.

[Policy reviewed and updated 4th September 2011]