



Author:	Matt Miles
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CURRICULUM POLICY

The aim of this Curriculum Policy is to make clear the principles and guidelines that underpin teaching and learning at University College School Junior Branch

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University College School

- Expectations are high
- Individuals are nurtured
- Creativity is valued through an exceptional learning community.

We have high expectations of the whole school community in terms of progress, achievement, behaviour and engagement to ensure that our children are ready for the next stage of their education and to prepare them to contribute effectively to British society. The staff and Governing Body model these high expectations in all daily interactions and behaviours around the school. We work hard to remove barriers to learning. Teaching and learning is a process of cooperative teamwork including pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, governors and support agencies in our local and wider community and across the UCS Foundation.

We have high aspirations for all of our students in the core subjects of English, maths and science which will equip them to make a valuable contribution to the school and wider society. This, together with specialist teaching and in humanities and languages, has enabled UCS pupils to go on to very strong academic careers in the Senior School and beyond.

Creativity has a high priority. It is a process that requires both freedom to experiment and the use of skills, knowledge and understanding. It is a vehicle to develop self-esteem, confidence and engagement both with the curriculum and with the ever-changing world that our children are living in. The school ensures that all pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum where creativity is taught through core and foundation subjects and where technical and aesthetic skills are taught explicitly through Drama, Music, Art and Design Technology.

UCS places a high value on Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education. We understand our duty to teach our boys to not only achieve academically but to be role models in society, claiming their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities as future citizens. This is taught through weekly PHSEE lessons, supported by weekly wellbeing lessons as well as being embedded in the daily life of the school.

The school also acknowledges that Games is an important part of our curriculum, not just allowing our boys to maintain a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the other benefits that team and individual sports can bring, but also to teach our pupils the value of sportsmanship, comradeship and playing within the rules. We pride ourselves in the outstanding achievements of UCS Junior Branch boys over the years.

The Curriculum

We use a range of resources to support our curriculum including drawing on current research and pedagogical understanding to create a bespoke curriculum for the school and its high achieving students.

We draw upon aspects of the National Curriculum acknowledging that it is important to measure ourselves against nationally agreed standards and teaching a broad and balanced curriculum in line with British values.

Language and communication are equally at the heart of children's learning. It is central to social and emotional development and is the main instrument of learning across the curriculum. The ability to communicate gives children the capacity to participate fully in our society. We embrace language and communication in its widest sense and our teaching of the English curriculum reflects this. We know that good communicators check their understanding and have a flexible attitude to getting their message across. We acknowledge that some of our children are bilingual and we believe this to be educationally enriching. We want them to bring their experiences of language at home into the school so that their developing uses of English and other languages support each other.

Mathematics is an integral part of the world in which we live. It provides a means of communication that is powerful, concise and unambiguous. Mathematics is not about answers, it's about processes. Learning to think in mathematical terms is an essential part of becoming an educated person. The essential skills of mathematical reasoning and arithmetic are both taught with the expectation that UCS will excel in both areas, preparing them for their continued studies after Year 6.

Science provides us with a process for developing scientific attitudes, skills and knowledge, which are a means for children to explore, question and understand the world, themselves and other living things. Science is essential to the development of each child. It is a process of exploration that begins long before the child enters school. We aim to build upon experiences and develop the skills, attitudes and concepts that enable scientific exploration, but science exploration in itself will also develop these skills and attitudes.

All pupils take part in weekly Art or Design Technology, Music and Drama lessons delivered by specialist teachers in our fully featured Art, DT, Drama and Music studios. Our teaching of technical skills enables pupils to develop, plan and communicate their ideas, working with tools, equipment, instruments, materials and components. The aesthetic skills of making, composing and inventing are taught explicitly in Art, Music, Drama and the study of literature. The personal, imaginative and practical responses of pupils are strongly encouraged.

Humanities are taught by highly experienced teachers who bring the knowledge and understanding of the world to life in the classroom. Many of our children are able to bring rich experiences from their home or family into the classroom environment. We actively encourage the pupils to draw upon their own experiences to enrich our curriculum either in lesson time, through our extensive system of clubs or through parental involvement and visits. Not only does this raise the self-esteem of individual students, but celebrates the rich and diverse community that we have established at UCS over the years.

Pupils study languages, including French and Spanish, weekly. This further enhances UCS boys' understanding and appreciation of the wider world and their experience of other cultures.

ICT and computing are taught in standalone ICT lessons but also through the use of technology to support other subjects across the curriculum. All pupils have full-time access to either their own or the school's digital devices which we encourage the children to use to support their learning and to encourage independence and further study. How technology can be used safely and with regard to their rights and the rights of others is an important part of the ICT curriculum.

Planning

Effective and robust planning, evaluation and assessment systems coupled with the delivery of a creative, broad and balanced curriculum ensure the exceptional achievement of all children in our school.

Our quality provision is based upon 30% planning and 70% implementation.

Planning is structured in 3 phases:

- Long Term Planning
- Medium term planning
- Weekly and daily planning

School leaders monitor planning regularly.

Long Term

- The school regularly reviews and updates its long term plans. We acknowledge that we live in an ever-changing world and that our curriculum needs to reflect this. It is important that our pupils are equipped with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for life as they progress to senior school education, further and higher education and their life beyond.

- Topics within subjects are planned so that skills and experiences build on pupils' prior knowledge whilst stretching and challenging all pupils, in particular, those children with exceptional abilities.

- Subject Leaders and teachers are actively involved in the process of evaluation of the curriculum at the end of each year.

Medium Term

- The medium term plans outline the scope and sequence of teaching over each unit of work.
- Within their phases and year groups teachers work to embed key skills and learning outcomes across curricular areas with clear outcomes.
- Opportunities to use digital learning are encouraged.
- Links between curricular areas are made explicit.
- Opportunities for learning outside the classroom are explored within units of work to deepen learning.
- Opportunities are established for display, assessment and the celebration of pupils work within medium term planning.

Short Term

- Quality Provision is captured in the weekly resourcing.
- Year group teachers work collaboratively to ensure that short term planning is strong and effectively delivered.
- Learning objectives and success criteria are identified and demonstrate clear differentiation for groups and individuals within the class.
- Deployment of additional adults is made explicit.

Progression

Pupils enter UCS Junior Branch at age 7 in Year 3. Some children arrive from external feeder schools, but about half will typically arrive via UCS Pre-Prep. We work with all of our feeder schools to ensure that there is an effective handover. With the Pre-Prep, we additionally work closely to ensure that work is pitched appropriately in Year 3 to offer the right level of challenge for our entry Pre-Prep students. All Year 3 students receive extensive baseline testing on entry to the school.

Almost all boys leave Junior Branch at the end of Year 6 to continue their UCS career at the Senior School. All boys sit the Senior School 11+ entrance exam. This serves two purposes: firstly, it provides an excellent baseline assessment for Year 7 Senior School teachers and senior leaders; secondly, it provides a focus for Junior Branch teachers to ensure that the boys achieve or exceed Senior School entrance requirements.

All UCS Foundation branches work closely together to ensure that individuals' achievement opportunities are maximised.

Assessment

Assessment is not a singular activity; it is both the ongoing process of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as well as the measurement of performance at a given point in time. A yearly assessment cycle monitors individual and group attainment and progress rigorously across the school. In our school, we use a numerical system for tracking attainment and progress.

Assessment for Learning

- Teachers continually assess understanding within lessons through a range of strategies including questioning, self and peer assessment, learning conversations and target setting. Feedback, both oral and written is given to learners during lessons and through the marking of books.
- Next steps marking along with self and peer assessment is an expectation and is embedded throughout the school.
- A clear assessment cycle is established in the school to support the robust tracking of the progress of individuals and groups of children.
- Children are assessed for attainment and progress in November, March and May. Their attainment, together with their individual targets are sent home to parents and carers as a Report Card in the Autumn and Spring Terms and as a School Report at the end of the Summer Term.
- The data from these assessments form the basis of Parental Consultations and Pupil Progress Reviews.

Targets

- Targets provide clear next steps for children's learning. Self and peer assessment are valued strategies, which enable pupils' involvement and ownership of their own learning and progress.

Targets are set against age related expectations (ARE) in line with National Curriculum and UCS standards.

Moderation

- A robust moderation and analysis of the attainment and progress of individuals, specific cohorts and significant groups is made across the year by Middle and Senior Leaders. These reports inform Pupil Progress Reviews and the School Improvement Plan for the following academic year.

Record Keeping

Class teachers are responsible for keeping up to date class information which includes:

- Class lists & pupil information
- Information regarding EAL, Ethnicity, medical, SEND and dietary needs
- Attainment data including CATS and previous test results.
- Grouping information
- Policies and Procedures

All adults working with children are responsible for regular Assessment for Learning practices and the marking of books in line with the school's assessment and marking expectations.

Communication

Within school

All adults working with children are expected to share information in an appropriate and timely manner

- Teachers are expected to regularly share and discuss record-keeping information, books and planning with partner teachers and middle and senior leaders.
- Pupils' progress and attainment are monitored and discussed with school leaders.
- All class teachers carry out a 'Transition Meeting' at key transition points to communicate record keeping and planning information with new class teachers, the pastoral team and school leaders.

With parents and carers

- School Staff are in the playground at the end of the day to encourage informal communications.
- Transitional parent consultations at the start of the academic year.
- Regular parent meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress.
- The school prides itself on having excellent relationships with parents, recognizing the important role that strong family support has on good academic performance.

With Pupils

- Next steps marking, self and peer assessment are embedded elements of all lessons. Pupils are expected to engage with, reflect on and respond to opportunities to improve their learning.
- Regular class meetings are held to ensure pupils have the opportunity to exercise their pupil voice.
- A school council, made up of elected representatives from Years 1 to 6, is established at the start of each year to provide a vehicle for pupil voice.

- Pupils are actively encouraged at all times to share thoughts and opinions in the day to day running of the school and wider school development

The Learning Environment

We believe our school must provide our pupils with a stimulating environment in which to learn. The learning environment must be safe, clean, well-organised and resourced. Displays are an integral part of the learning environment and are expected to celebrate children's learning, reflect the cultural diversity of the school community and support teaching and learning.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Teachers, as part of their classroom programme, explore and apply learning opportunities contextually outside of the classroom environment. The school has sites of local and national importance in its locality which provide opportunities to gain a more thorough understanding of the curriculum through first-hand experience.

This is driven through:

- Making use of the significant cultural, historical and educational resources in the locality
- The use of the playground and school spaces beyond the classroom as a learning resource

The use of the local community

- Opportunities to travel on the range of public transport available in and beyond the local community
- Providing opportunities to enrich, extend and apply school work through home learning.

Home Learning

Homework is used to extend children's opportunities for learning beyond the school gates. We acknowledge that establishing strong study skills early is key to building a successful academic and school career. Homework focuses on core subjects with a carousel of other subjects so that children can share their school experience with families and enjoy the same breadth of curriculum activities at home as they do at school.

Remote Learning

As and when children are unable to attend school due to government or health restrictions, provision is in place to ensure that learning is not interrupted. This is achieved through a package of blended learning that includes:

- Video link with pupils' class lessons
- Enhanced homework provision
- Regular phone contact with the family
- Use of online learning technologies eg. Google Classroom, Century etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

The implementation of the policy will be monitored through:

- Lessons observations
- Planning scrutiny
- Book Scrutiny
- Pupil progress reviews
- Pupil Interviews
- Parent surveys and feedback