

United Learning Curriculum Statement

Intent – our ambition for our pupils; how we achieve the best in everyone

Our aim is to provide an excellent education for all our students; an education which brings out the best in all of them and prepares them for success in life. Our curriculum is designed to provide children with the core knowledge they need for success in education and later life, to maximise their cognitive development, to develop the whole person and the talents of the individual and to allow all children to become active and economically self-sufficient citizens.

Hundreds of United Learning teachers and leaders have been involved in developing the United Learning Curriculum as a core academic curriculum, founded on these key principles:

- **Entitlement** – We believe that all children have the right to learn what is in the United Learning Curriculum; schools have a duty to ensure that all children are taught the whole of it.
- **Mastery** – We want all students to achieve a full understanding of the knowledge specified in the Curriculum for each year, and teaching should not move on until this is achieved.
- **Stability** – We won't constantly amend the Curriculum: while we should make occasional adjustments in the light of feedback and experience, we will aim for stability over many years, so that teachers can develop expertise, and we constantly build assessments and teaching materials to support the Curriculum.
- **Concepts not context** – The Curriculum is intended as a concise specification of knowledge and content to be taught and learned; it is for schools and teachers to decide how to teach and bring it to life.

Implementation – how we expose our pupils to powerful knowledge and provide education with character

The curriculum in each subject can be accessed via our website <https://www.northoxfordshire-academy.org/Academy-Info/11-18-Curriculum>

Subject specialism is at the heart of our curriculum and you will see differences in the way that the curriculum is constructed and assessed in different subjects. Standardised written assessments, for example, play less of a role in performance subjects such as music, drama and physical education. The stability of our curriculum allows subject expertise to develop over time, and we are careful to provide sufficient time for teachers of the same subject to plan together and collaborate.

Further subject specialism is provided by United Learning's subject advisors. These advisors are subject experts who help teachers link the subject discipline to our pupils' daily experience in the classroom. Subject advisors meet regularly with Heads of Department across United Learning and provide curriculum resources to support the implementation of the subject curriculum.

As a mastery curriculum our pupils study fewer topics in greater depth, with the expectation that we don't move on to the next topic until all pupils have a secure understanding of the current topic. A 3-year Key Stage 3 provides pupils with the time and space to gain this secure understanding. In our lessons we expect to see all pupils grappling with the same challenging content, with teachers providing additional support for pupils who need it. Rather than moving on to new content, our higher attainers produce work of greater depth and flair.



Our approach to teaching and learning supports our curriculum by ensuring that lessons build on prior learning and provide sufficient opportunity for guided and independent practice. We use Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction to develop our teaching practice. At the heart of Rosenshine's principles is a simple instructional core:

- **Demonstration:** Teacher presents new information in small steps
- **Guided practice** with models, prompts and scaffolds
- **Independent practice** with monitoring and feedback from the teacher.

At each point in this instructional core, teachers check understanding of all pupils by asking lots of questions and providing feedback.

The Rosenshine principles support the implementation of the curriculum by ensuring that pupils regularly recall prior learning. You will often see this at the start of our lessons. When prior learning is committed to long term memory it becomes fluent or 'automatic', freeing space in our working memory which can then be used for comprehension, application, and problem solving.

In order to allow the mastery approach to be effective (i.e. children learn what they are expected to in the year they are expected to), early catch-up is essential: we aim to promptly identify and support pupils who start secondary school without a secure grasp of reading, writing and mathematics so that they can access the full curriculum.

Everything from which children learn in school – the taught subject timetable, the approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the co-curricular provision and the ethos and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – are to be seen as part of the school curriculum. Our principle of 'Education with Character' is delivered through the curriculum in this broadest sense.

Impact – how we measure and secure continuous improvement for all

With thousands of pupils across United Learning following the same curriculum, we have been able to develop common assessments in most subjects. These are summative assessments which allow pupils to demonstrate their growing understanding of their subjects and enable teachers to assess the impact of their teaching. These summative assessments are typically taken once or twice a year, allowing teachers to focus on formative assessment from lesson to lesson.

We are particularly conscious of the role that literacy and vocabulary plays in unlocking the whole curriculum. Our teachers explicitly teach the meaning of subject-specific language, and we expect lessons to contain challenging reading and writing. Knowledge organisers provide students with key information that they are expected to learn and recall with fluency, enabling them to develop their understanding of key concepts outside of their lessons.

The culmination of our curriculum is that pupils leave our school with the confidence and intelligence to thrive. We know our pupils as individuals which enables us to provide curriculum guidance and careers guidance throughout their time with us. We expect all pupils to leave our school with the grades required to progress to their desired destination, and the character required to flourish once they get there.

By teaching our curriculum well, and delivering education with character, we bring out the best in everyone.

