

Monday 16 December 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians

### **Principal's Winter Newsletter**

As we approach the end of the autumn term and look forward to the holiday period, we reflect on what has been a very busy, productive and successful term for the Academy.

Inducting 180 new Foundation level students into the Academy way has been a pleasure. They have settled in very well and have added greatly to our growing community. Likewise, new and returning Level 3 students have fully embraced the high aspirations and expectations of the UCL Academy. This term, members of staff working with Level 3 have developed robust systems and processes to ensure that the students are working effectively. Students have been monitored and tracked by their Heads of Houses and Assistant-Principal, Ms Lucas, and we are seeing the impact of this through improved attainment. The Level 3 and Level 3+ STEM mock exams took place earlier this month and the students have received feedback on their areas for improvement.

### **UCAS applications**

There is currently a lot of excitement around the UCAS application process and we are delighted that a large number of students have received invitations to attend interviews at Cambridge University, Oxford University and University College London.

### **Career Breakfasts**

The Career Breakfast events have been a very successful and rewarding initiative for the students. Two events have already been held focusing on medicine and engineering and more are scheduled for the New Year. We are very grateful to all that have participated as the events provide invaluable information to the students about various professions. We are also very keen for parents to get involved wherever possible, be it through taking part in a breakfast event or through the offering of placements at their place of work. If you are able to offer any support for this initiative, please contact us by email on [enquiries@uclcademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@uclcademy.co.uk).

## **UCL links**

Our relationship with UCL has strengthened further over the last term. In terms of our activities, there are three key areas of interest:

- 1) The UCL Guest Lecture Series – We have been delighted to welcome two leading UCL academics to the Academy this term; Dr Francisco Diego of UCL's Space Science Department and Dr Daniel Richardson of the Cognitive Neuroscience Department. Their lectures were a huge hit with all attendees and we look forward to the lectures planned for the New Year.
- 2) Object-Based Learning – This term we gratefully received 6 fascinating objects from UCL Museums and Collections. They have been the focus of projects by Level 1 and Foundation students and have proved very popular with the students.
- 3) Mentoring – This is perhaps the most exciting development. 80 Undergraduate UCL students have applied to be mentors to our Level 1 and Level 3 students and the first sessions are to be held on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 January. The programme will use a platform called Brightside to enable secure and monitored communication between the mentor and mentee. An information session for parents will be held in January.

## **Spring term arrangements**

To enable the Academy to fully prepare for what is expected to be another busy term, arrangements for the start of the spring term have been amended slightly. On Monday 6 January only the Level 3 and Level 3+ students will return to the Academy and will have the opportunity to take any STEM resits and non-STEM mock exams. All other students will return to the Academy on Tuesday 7 January at 8.30am.

At the end of this term, we say goodbye to Assistant-Principal, Ms Noctor. We thank her for her hard work and contribution to the Academy and wish her every success in her new role.

Please find attached to this letter, a letter from your child's respective Assistant-Principal detailing the many activities that have taken place in their year group this term.

The Academy Winter Newsletter will also follow at the end of this term.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and wish you all a peaceful holiday period.

Yours faithfully



Geraldine Davies  
Principal

Monday 16 December 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians

### Head of Level 1's Newsletter

#### **Big Idea Unit 3: Tradition. *Beliefs and customs from the past have a powerful effect on our lives today***

I hope this letter finds you well at the end of a packed term and in the run up to the Christmas period. I am contacting you with a review of the academic year so far and information about the term and unit ahead. I continue in my aim to provide you with as much information as I can in order to make what we are doing within the Academy as transparent as possible and to enable you to support your child's learning at home.

I would like to remind you that the Level 1 Parent Consultation evening is being held between 3.30pm and 5.30pm on Tuesday 21 January. Prior to this opportunity to discuss attainment and progress with your child's teachers you will be provided with a progress and attainment report. These reports will offer detailed information about current working at levels, levels of progress being made academically and in other key areas linked to learning. The reports will draw upon all data collected across the first term and will offer a clear picture of your child's academic development here at the Academy since September. When combined with the end of Foundation report this will offer a complete picture of your child's academic journey so far.

For us here at the Academy the past term has been an interesting and rewarding one. We have worked hard to improve our communications, emailing, texting, sending letters home and posting the latest news on our website in a bid to make what we are doing within the Academy much more transparent. We will soon be launching our new website which will enable us to share even more with you on a weekly basis.

We have undertaken a significant amount of work with a number of external agencies and education experts including the educationalist Alistair Smith and former HMI inspectors to

ensure that both the quality of teaching and learning within the Academy is of the highest quality and to ensure that our own internal judgments are accurate. We, and the students, have been praised by external agencies, who have commended what we are doing within the Academy. Our own feeling that something special is happening is bore out not only by the high praise received by the multitude of visitors but also from early indicators of the levels of progress being made by students within the core subjects of science, English, reading and, in particular, mathematics. In addition our students continue to receive a well-balanced education and experiences many never get. In the last two weeks alone students performed in a national Mandarin competition and all of Level 1 were involved in an Opera workshop. Due to the rigor of the L1 curriculum and the levels of progress being facilitated by it we are developing our L1+ curriculum to extend its most effective elements while drawing down aspects from post Key Stage Three curricula. The work is well underway mapping out Personalised Pathways, to be applied at Level 2, so all students can gain skills and qualifications for adult life.

As students enter into their teenage years, issues relating to social acceptance, appearance and identity are beginning to emerge. We are working hard to ensure that students deal with these changes in positive ways, supporting them at a learning set, House and whole group level. To support this we are continuing our PSHE programme dealing with issues around bullying, online presence and community-cultural understanding. We are furthering this with a PSHE day near the end of January in which issues relating to health and wellbeing will be addressed. This will include working with our excellent caterers Pabulum to understand nutrition and healthy eating. We are also sending a clear message to students that behaviours which could be considered to be bullying, such as name calling or teasing, are not acceptable in or outside the Academy. Those not heeding warnings are being dealt with swiftly and forcefully through the Academy behavior system.

As well as the continuation of our rewards system we have enhanced our sanctions systems to clearly express to students what will happen if they demonstrate negative social or learning behaviours. For such negative behaviours students are issued with negative behavior points. Students have the ability to reduce their points by achieving positive behavior points and performing acts that highlight a change in behaviours. Throughout this students work closely with their tutor and Head of House in order to make these positive changes in behaviour.

Over the past term we have been developing an online e-portfolio and e-assessment system that will help support students learning in and out of the classroom. It is hoped that this system will be in place by February. In the meantime if you are interested in seeing what potential this system has please view the following site [www.realsmart.co.uk](http://www.realsmart.co.uk).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for ensuring students remain well dressed and ready for learning here at the Academy. However I have noticed a slight rise in late arrivals in the morning and would like your support in ensuring students' get to the Academy before the gates are shut at 8.30am. In the most part students are arriving with full equipment for learning including pens, a pencil, ruler, eraser, calculator and planner. Yet some students do not have a notebook or an appropriate reading book. Could you please ensure these items are being carried by your child as part of their Academy

equipment for learning.

As a research engaged institution we are at present reviewing the Home Learning Policy in light of new findings and in light of the observed effects of the existing home learning arrangements on our students. Until a change is announced we will continue setting Home Learning Projects each half term. I hope that you found the project outline provided by subjects last unit useful. As well as the projects you should expect to see your child completing some form of home learning each night in support of their learning within the Academy. As well as the projects, set home learning recorded within the planners students should also be reading for pleasure, completing Go Chinese, Manga High, My Maths and additional challenge activities hosted on Fronter.

This half term projects are being set by:

- Project 1: Science
- Project 2: RE and International Mindedness, culminating in a celebration of our cultural and religious diversity (food and storytelling)

During the upcoming unit students will be studying the following topic areas within their subjects:

Mathematics	The mathematic tradition: Algebra, Fractions, Decimals and Ratios
Science	The scientific tradition: Compounds and the Elements. The Periodic Table
English	Traditional storytelling
Engineering	Working to design and produce either a solar light or a balancing toy
Mandarin	A study of Chinese food
History	The nature and effects of the British Empire
Geography	Tourism, its features and effects
Computing	Scratch programming and code writing
Art	Design and make a Japanese Kite
Physical Education	Traditional dance from around the world - Gum Boot, Hakka, Dragon Dance

You may wish to use the above as a guide to support and extend your child's learning at home. Further resources and support linked to the above is available through Fronter.

Within this third unit we will also seek to develop student skills in the following areas:

1. To know about a range of views, cultures and traditions
2. To be able to consider and respect the views, cultures and traditions of other people
3. To be able to act on their own moral standpoints
4. To be able to explain the reasons for their actions
5. To be able to develop an increasingly mature response to the 'other'
6. To be able to show consideration for others when making choices and decisions both in and outside of the school community
7. To know about the similarities and the differences between the lives of people in

different countries

We would appreciate your support in enabling learners to develop these important attributes and dispositions.

Should you have any further questions about the above, the year so far and the year ahead, please don't hesitate to contact us on 0207 449 3080 or visit us in reception at the UCL Academy.

As ever I would like to help you make contact with the people who are best placed to deal with any questions you may have. When contacting reception please request the following:

- **For concerns relating to subject specific progress and performance** request to speak to the Curriculum Lead for that department
- **For concerns relating to the non-academic wellbeing of your child** request to speak to your child's Tutor or Head of House
- **For concerns relating to progress and performance across subjects** or for issues you feel cannot be resolved by the above request to speak to myself, the Assistant-Principal for Level 1

I look forward to speaking to you soon and seeing as many of you as I can at the Parents Consultation evening in January.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Gratton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr R Gratton  
Assistant-Principal (Level 1)