

Downe House – Trailblazers of Cambridge Pre-U tell their story

Two years ago Downe House switched to Cambridge Pre-U in all subjects. We put questions to the school's head teacher, Mrs Emma McKendrick, and former student, Sophie Meadows, about their experiences as the first trailblazers of Cambridge Pre-U.



Questions to Mrs Emma McKendrick

Q. Why did you choose to switch to Cambridge Pre-U in all subjects?

A. We decided to take this significant step because we believed that Cambridge Pre-U had the potential to meet the needs of our students and prepare them extremely well, not just to gain entry to university, but to really succeed when they are there, as well as in the world of work beyond.

Q. How has your school been involved in the development of Cambridge Pre-U?

A. Teachers at Downe House have been involved from the start in designing the syllabuses and continue to play a part in developing the system. We feel very much a part of the Cambridge Pre-U community.



Questions to Sophie Meadows

Q. How did it feel to be one of the first set of students in the country to take Cambridge Pre-U?

A. We were initially worried about the potential stretch of Cambridge Pre-U and the fact that it was unfamiliar. However, we were reassured by our teachers, who told us to be proud of our role as trailblazers.

Q. Did your concerns last long?

A. No! Enthusiasm for the course from our teachers caught on. Our History teacher, Mr Hobbs, was hopping with excitement in our first Cambridge Pre-U History lesson! As lessons continued throughout the term, we realised we weren't out of our depth – it was all within our reach.

Q. Did Cambridge Pre-U change how you feel about your subjects?

A. Yes – most definitely. The emphasis which the course places on independent research largely increased people's focus, passion and conviction for their subjects. The Cambridge Pre-U format enhances skills such as independent thinking and critical analysis. This makes it easier to gain a thorough understanding and enjoyment of a subject or topic, rather than simply fulfilling syllabus requirements.

Q. What was the key benefit of being a Cambridge Pre-U student?

A. Additional teaching time because fewer lessons were spent revising. This allowed more time to come to terms with the skills required for Cambridge Pre-U and most importantly allowed time to develop the skills needed for university.



DOWNE HOUSE

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