“The pattern of King Alfred School may, I think, be likened to the valley of a river. The width and length of this valley does not greatly alter over the years, but the actual river bed is being shaped continually by the movement of the water which is always seeking out the best route to follow and altering its course accordingly.

We and the children in the school represent the river and all those who are, or have been, a part of the school have made their contribution... those who return to King Alfredds after 10, 20, or 30 years of absence recognise an atmosphere and a spirit that does not change. This spirit is perfectly summed up in our motto: _ex corde vita_...

It is not what you put into the child, but what you draw out that constitutes education.”

BH Montgomery
Head of KAS 1945-1962
Welcome to Years 7, 8 & 9

Adam Findlay
Head of Year 7 & Transition

Most students entering Upper School do so at Year 7 and we hope that the transition from Year 6 goes as smoothly as possible for both you and your children. We provide a nurturing, stabilising environment; helping pupils to overcome any obstacles at this transitional stage. For students entering from other schools, we offer additional support in helping them to acclimatise to the school and make new friendships. Alongside the curricular and extracurricular programmes in Year 7, we run special events, such as the orientation at the beginning of the Year 7 Personal Project, which offer other opportunities for all pupils to build strong relationships with staff and one another.

Year 7 provides a foundation for development, as individuals and as members of the community. We also encourage pupils to take more and more responsibility for themselves, helping them to become more independent learners. This, combined with our child-centred approach helps every child to achieve his or her potential.

Claire Murphy
Head of Years 8 & 9

In Years 8 & 9 we aim to build upon students’ experience and further support their development as well rounded individuals. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes academic studies, a varied extracurricular programme and many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom.

As well as encouraging students to be independent learners, we actively promote Mutual Respect. This is one of our core values and is central to the successful relationships fostered between staff, pupils and parents. I would encourage you all to read ‘The Framework’ on the website, as this gives you excellent insight to our school’s values and ethos.
Message from the Head

The Middle Years of 7, 8 and 9 provide the next exciting phase in your child’s education. The school takes much pride in supporting each child to develop the personal qualities and skills to be a successful learner in an environment where there is a sense of freedom and an emphasis on the enjoyment of learning.

Parents are a very important part of our community and we welcome and encourage you to become involved in the life of the school.

This guide will give you an insight into the ways Years 7, 8 and 9 operate on a day to day basis, and the channels of communication between home and school.

I look forward to meeting you personally at one of our many social occasions.

Robert Lobatto
HEAD

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Introduction to Years 7, 8 & 9

When students enter Year 7, we create three parallel forms of 16 or 17 students from our Year 6 and the new children who join each year from other schools.

Small groups allow all students to play an active part in their learning, and ensure that all voices are heard in discussion. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and become more confident through taking on responsibilities and taking risks. It also means their teachers get to know them as individuals.

We mix up the classes again as students move to Year 8 and Year 9, so that students get to know more of the other students; it establishes a whole year group identity and widens friendships. Students are encouraged to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are offered both after school and during breaks.

Rules are kept to a minimum and are based on rationality, safety and the principle of Mutual Respect enshrined in our Framework. Our policies are well known to students and used if infringements occur.

We expect students to share responsibility and care for the school environment they enjoy. Our small size, emphasis on trust, open communication and negotiation results in an atmosphere in which each individual student and adult is valued and heard.

Contact List – Key People

The first point of contact for day to day matters is your child’s form tutor. For more sensitive matters, please contact Adam Findlay, Head of Year 7, or Claire Murphy, Head of Years 8 & 9. A list of staff email addresses is on the school website.

Structure of the Day

Our day begins with registration at 8.55am in form rooms. Registration is a legal requirement and should a child miss it he/she has to check in at Reception. If a child is absent please call the front desk on 020 8457 5200 or email absence@kingalfred.org.uk so that the absence can be authorised.

During their time in Years 7 & 8 students are not allowed out of school during the day. The first occasion that your child is allowed out of school will be at lunchtime in the summer term of Year 9. If there is a need for a student to miss school we ask parents to write to the form tutor.

Lunch

Most students choose to have school lunch. The quality and wide range each day includes a choice of four/five hot meals, vegetarian options, a selection of salads, yogurts and fresh fruit. Some students have packed lunches. Daily lunch tickets can be purchased from the Bursary.

Instrumental Lessons

Instrumental lessons for a wide range of instruments and voice are offered through peripatetic music teachers. Students have these lessons before or after school, or come out of lessons in rotation. These are not included in school fees, payment is made direct to the teacher. To book private lessons please contact the Director of Music.

School Clubs and Drop-Ins

Many clubs and extra-curricular activities are offered to students in Upper School. Many departments have drop-in times where students can go for help with their homework, or any aspect of the subject they need help with (usually before or after school).

Clubs range from sports clubs and teams for Football, Netball, Hockey, Touch Rugby, Badminton, Basketball, Rounders, Tennis, to music instrument groups or choirs, Barbershop, Chamber Choir, Jazz Choir, Middle School Choir, Jazzworks, Flute Group, Soul Band, Orchestra, to subject specific clubs: French debating, Latin, Italian, Maths Club, History Society, Reading groups, Sewing Club, ICT Club, Creative Writing Club, School Newspaper Club, Art Club and the Biscuit Club (homework). These will meet either at first break, lunch time or after school.
Learning

Detailed information on each subject offered in Years 7, 8 & 9, starts on page 17.

The Curriculum

There are six periods per day except Wednesday, lasting 50 minutes each. We run a brochure timetable allocation of periods per fortnight:

In Year 7 there are seven periods of English and Maths, six periods of Sciences and Modern Foreign Languages; four periods of History, Geography, Art and Games; two periods of Drama, Music, PSHE, PE, DT and IT. There are two periods per fortnight dedicated to a Tutorial session and four periods called Choice when students are offered a choice of non-examinable subjects.

In Year 8 there are seven periods of English and Maths; six periods of Sciences and Modern Foreign Languages; four periods of History, Geography, Art and Games; and two periods of Drama, Music, PSHE, DT, CT and PE.

In Year 9 there are seven periods of English; eight periods of Maths and Sciences; six periods of Modern Foreign Languages; four periods of History, Geography, Art and PE/Games; and two periods of Music, Drama, PSHE, DT, IT and Art (craft, pottery and art). As in the previous two years, two periods per fortnight is dedicated to a Tutorial session and four periods to a Choice subject.

Aims of the Curriculum in Years 7, 8 & 9

The curriculum is the development of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual knowledge and experience. We aim to ensure that children can progress and achieve their individual potential. We hope to provide a secure environment in which all children are encouraged to be inquisitive, discuss ideas and listen to each other without fear, over-anxiety or pressure of external tests. We want to produce confident young people who increasingly become independent learners. We work in a partnership between home and school. Our aims are:

- To maintain continuity and progress from Lower School to Upper School.
- To have children who are active participants in their own learning.
- To provide a curriculum that is challenging, motivating and encourages creativity.
- To value high level thinking and learning in and out of the classroom as well as simple measurable outcomes. To make high expectations known and achievable.
- To value those with different abilities and to generate self-esteem.
- To develop social responsibility within and beyond the school.

Choice

In addition to the main curriculum subjects, we offer Choice on a Friday afternoon, which brings students from Years 7, 8 and 9 together. Choices have been put into three categories: Head, Heart and Soul. ‘Head’ refers to learning a new intellectual skill, ‘Heart’ involves mainly physical exercise and ‘Soul’ includes those choices that do something for the community. Choices offered may include Photography, Sailing, Film Club, Cooking, Football, Hockey, Song and Dance, Costume Design, Oaklodge Art Project, Helping in Lower School and Recycling. Each student selects one Choice from each category over the course of the year. The fourth Choice can be from any of the categories.

Homework

Our aim is that students should gradually undertake responsibility for their own progress. Within broad deadlines we want the students to establish their own homework timetable, although Year 7 does receive considerable guidance on this. It is never our intention that homework should become a burden and if your child becomes stressed over their homework please contact us sooner rather than later. If, on the other hand, your child is not spending time on homework at home, we would like to know. As mentioned earlier, the first point of contact for day-to-day affairs should be the form tutor.

Homework via the Canvas VLE

Canvas is the virtual learning environment for all students in Years 7-13 at King Alfred School. A virtual learning environment (VLE) is a software-based platform that provides a framework and tools to facilitate online learning both inside and outside of the school building.

Canvas bundles assignments (homework), webpages of information, grading, messaging tools and more—while keeping everything simple, easy, and in one place. Canvas was chosen as the King Alfred School VLE for its wide range of easy to use tools for teachers, students and parents. Homework is posted in Canvas on
each class calendar and can be viewed by clicking on the calendar link in the main navigation menu. We have made a commitment to all parents that all homework will be added to Canvas and can be accessed via the calendar.

Information for parents of Year 7 about how to log on to Canvas will be sent in September and parents will be invited to attend training sessions at the start of term to learn more.

Assembly, ‘Callover’

We do not have a religious assembly. However, Years 7, 8 & 9 come together regularly in the Main Hall; this is traditionally known as Callover. In Callovers students can initiate new ideas or focus on a particular item of special interest to them.

Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE is a time in the week outside traditional subjects in which student’s personal, social and health matters can be looked at. It has a focus on the child as a growing person developing a distinct personality and developing relationships.

Interpersonal relationships and feelings are looked at through experiential games and the device of sitting in a circle where speaking and listening are controlled by guidelines agreed by students. The development of sensitive listening is one of the main aims. These methods allow the expression of feelings.

It is part of the aim in the PSHE programme to get children to see KAS as a community and to see what life is like from another’s point of view. We believe it is important that children be aware of the variety of communities there are around them and of which they are a part.
In Year 7 PSHE focuses on ‘transition’ in many senses, including the move to Upper School.

In Year 8, the programme focuses on health issues – physical and social development, drugs education and sex education. During this course, many ‘outside’ experts are invited to work with the students. Also, some of the sessions are used to prepare students for The Village Project.

In Year 9 a wide range of subjects are covered which may include team building, finance, current affairs debates, broad issues such as race, youth and gender in the media, emotional intelligence and an opportunity for individual projects. Although we deal with a wide range of issues in PSHE, the overarching theme for these three years is the development of emotional and social literacy. In a time of accelerated change, we adapt our curriculum in ‘real’ time to respond to the needs of the group. The programme promotes the fundamental British values and enhances students’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

**Careers Education and Guidance**

In Year 7 we help the students with the transition from Lower School, and encourage them to explore new interest in order to help with future choices.

The tutorial curriculum offers a careers unit, including a research project and talks from parents. The unit gives students an understanding of the different opportunities and pathways available, as they progress with their education.

This work is continued throughout Years 8, leading to a specialised programme in Year 9, designed to support students in making subject choices, and aid them with the transition into GCSE courses.

As part of this programme students will be encouraged to consider their strengths and weaknesses with the aim of developing greater self-awareness, in preparation for making these subject choices. They will begin to think about the world of work and how it relates to them. They will be required to do a day of community/work experience within the school, the aim of which is to give students an insight into a particular area of work by observing, listening, asking questions and working with an adult in school. Students will be required to evaluate this experience and to look at what skills are required for particular jobs and to consider their own skills and qualities.

To help students with GCSE choices, we run a GCSE Options evening, involving talks by all subject staff. We have a well-stocked and up-to-date careers library and use an interactive site providing guidance to students aged 13-19 for career and education choices. We hope the programme will help them to make the GCSE choices that really suit their needs and interests.

**Learning Support**

The Learning Support department works with those children who have Special Educational Needs. The Assistant Headteacher - Personalised Learning leads our team of Learning Support teachers and assistants.

**Transition**

A positive transition is important for all students joining the Middle School. For those children who have attended Lower School, the Lower and Upper School SENCOs work collaboratively to ensure good communication of information and to ensure a smooth transition of targeted provision. This process includes and involves parents. For new students to KAS, we use information from a range of sources; including the previous school, parents and our own assessments, to ensure that we understand the special educational needs of any children joining our community.

**Identification**

Special Educational Needs may manifest themselves at any time during a child’s development, due to a variety of reasons. We are committed to early identification of needs and have a referral process to investigate and follow up concerns about learning which may be raised by a teacher, parent or child themselves.

**Provision**

Teachers at KAS deliver high quality, differentiated lessons for all students. Students on the SEND Register also have a Learning Support Plan and a Student Profile; this outlines the student needs and the specific provision in place for them and ensures that all teachers are aware of this. Learning Support provision additional to the main classroom teaching ranges from small group to 1:1 interventions with the content of the support tailored towards the child’s needs.
The Pastoral System

The Pastoral Structure

Each year group in Years 7, 8 & 9 has about 50 students, up to 17 students in each class and it is in these class units that pastoral care is given.

Form tutors are the first port of call for parents, working closely with Head of Year 7 & Transition and Head of Years 8 & 9.

Classes meet once a week for a period known as Form Hour and four times a week they have a 20 minute registration period. Form tutors use this time for discussion of topics relevant to that year and also for keeping a check on academic progress and monitoring students’ pastoral issues. Head’s of the Year lead the programme and may also use this time for whole year group callovers.

Counselling

At KAS mental health and the promotion of emotional and psychological wellbeing for students is given a high priority. As such counselling has been offered throughout the school to all students for over 40 years and has become part of the fabric of the school – holding no stigma for students, and readily accessed and available to anyone who needs it.

Some students can experience difficulties in their lives and may need time to explore their feelings in a safe, confidential, non judgemental and supportive environment. Counselling offers students a place to talk about their concerns with someone who is not involved in their day to day lives. Many students come on their own initiative – they may have recognised their need and are able to ask for help. Others may be recommended by friends who have found counselling in school has been useful in the past, and some may be referred by a teacher or member of the Pastoral Team. Parents may also request counselling for their child – but these referrals will only be taken if the student is willing to participate in the sessions.

Counselling at KAS is offered free for a limited number of sessions, and students are able to self-refer from year 7 onwards. The counselling is confidential and does not require parental permission – although students are always encouraged to inform their parents. When it is considered appropriate, onward referrals to specialists outside of the school can be made.

Mentoring

KAS runs an annual peer mentoring programme. Mentoring is a structured trusting friendship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee.

Peer Mentors are carefully matched with mentees in both Lower and Upper school, who are then given the opportunity to talk to someone who has experienced similar things to them. This support can give both the mentor and mentee increased emotional resilience and helps them develop into happy and confident adults who can achieve their full potential.

A peer mentor is: A friend, coach, companion, supporter, advisor, role models, resource for new ideas and above all a trusted person to talk to.

The peer mentors are trained in school and the training is comprehensive and professional and teaches students how to offer support to their peers and focuses on key mentoring skills which include:

- Effective Listening
- Developing Trusting relationships
- Communication & Negotiation Skills
- Building Self Esteem
- Coping with Adversity
- Empathic communication

Training as a peer mentor is encouraged from year 8 upwards and peer mentors are close in age to their mentees. Although mentoring takes place in school, the focus is on building a relationship and not on academics.

Students have fortnightly callover run by a member of the SLT which aims to raise awareness about relevant topics affecting the KAS local, national or global community.
Learning Facilities

The Library

Students are welcome to use the library both before and after school and during breaks. During lesson time students will use the library, as advised by their teachers, either individually, in groups or as a whole class. The Librarian and Library Assistant are always available to give help and guidance. The Library itself is a flexible space that is used for teaching, research, revision, individual reading, author visits and reading activities.

The library collection supports and supplements the curricula of all the subject departments. There is also a quick reference section containing encyclopaedias and dictionaries, and a Careers Library. Fiction is divided into two parts – a Middle Years section for teenage and young adult fiction and an Upper School section for adult fiction. Confident readers are welcome to browse and borrow books from Upper School fiction and may be directed there and given guidance by the librarians and their English teachers. The library also holds a small collection of French and Spanish reading books and magazines aimed at the middle years.

The library subscribes to a number of online resources, which can be accessed from home and students are taught how to access and use these resources and given guidance in using the information in their school work. They are encouraged to use these together with books and the internet in order to gain useful practice in accessing and evaluating information.

Students in Years 7, 8 & 9 can borrow up to ten items and may keep them for up to one month before returning or renewing them. Regular reminders are given to students about overdue books. Items can also be reserved and students can make recommendations or request new books from the library.

Reader development

Throughout their school life we aim to help students become enthusiastic, confident readers who enjoy talking about and recommending books. We want students to see reading as an enjoyable and everyday activity. Apart from the development of spelling, vocabulary and imagination, reading widely helps children to think, question and become more articulate and confident adults.

The library works very closely with the English department to develop good reading practice. All middle years students have a reading period every two weeks in the library during which they can borrow, read and discuss books. A middle years book club meets weekly and a reading group shadows the Carnegie Medal every year. Individual book events also run throughout the year including Poetry Slams, World Book Day activities, author visits etc.
Learning Outside the Classroom

Camps

Camps are an integral part of the Upper School curriculum. For Year 7, camp takes place in September and provides an important opportunity for bonding as a year group. The whole year group, along with the form tutors and other staff, spends five days on the Norfolk coast, doing a range of activities. This may be linked to some preparation or follow-up work within the curriculum, such as geography field studies, or reflective writing in English.

In Years 8 and 9 camps take place at the end of June. They are not all under canvas though they will mostly require students to do their own catering, cleaning and be responsible for their own entertainment. We want children to experience something different from what they have during the rest of the year.

Groups are small and be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. Staff will allocate camp groups so that a balanced, co-operative mix of students is achieved in all cases.

The Year 7 Project

This enquiry-based learning project is designed to help Year 7 students to develop independence, resilience, and a reflective approach to learning. The project begins with ten weekly sessions: choosing a topic and refining the focus; setting goals; undertaking research; planning an outcome. For a week in June, the students, with the help of their project mentors, work in self-selected workspaces, following their own schedules, to complete their project. The week culminates in the Project Fair, where students present their projects, explaining what and how they have learned.

Enrichment and Museum Days

Occasionally the students will have what is called 'Enrichment Day' or 'Museum Day'. On this day they will go out of the school to visit Museums or Galleries that are showing something that is relevant to their studies in one or more of their subjects. Alternatively students may stay in the school to undertake an activity, eg a day in the Art rooms working in teams to produce large cardboard relief of Picasso art works.

The Village Project

Each May Year 8 spend a week living in huts in a fenced off area of the school grounds in huts they construct, with two student leaders they elect themselves. This is embedded in the Year 8 calendar and is used as learning tool, with the main themes, perseverance and persistence, resolving conflict, team building and problem solving, governance and community living and sustainability. The students do their own cooking and no electronic devices are permitted. During the day there are a range of activities available, blacksmithing, bush craft, foraging, drumming, making clay ovens and Village workbooks.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

The Duke of Edinburgh Award has been running at KAS for several successful years now. The Bronze award encourages students to independently complete four sections that consist of volunteering, skills, sport/physical activity, and an expedition. Students must pick one option from a list that is available on www.dofe.org and carry them out for an hour a week, for either three or six months. To complete the award students must commit to the award for about 12 months. Students will be given guidance in Choice sessions that will start in the Spring term, and then must complete the award on their own thereafter. The award can be started in Year 9, 10, 11 or in the Sixth Form. The award is vocational in its nature, and can reward students with a great sense of achievement and purpose, especially when helping others in the volunteering section and when working in a team for the expedition. The expedition involves camping in the countryside, an adventurous 6-8 hour walk, and cooking your own food.

School Trips

There are a range of trips for students, including an annual ski trip, an exchange with a school in China, a trip to Namibia, sailing trips, and language immersion trips to France and Spain.

The King Alfred School | Out of the heart springs life
Communications

It is very important for us to work closely with parents and we welcome regular communication of any changes that might affect your child or queries you may have about any aspects of school life. Informal contact is often possible; longer consultations may require a ‘phone call or email to make an appointment. A list of all staff email addresses are on the website and in Stage Books.

Report Meetings and Written Reports

Two terms each year there will be a report meeting when you will meet your child’s teachers. Once a year you will receive a written report on your child, detailed by subject.

Parentmails and Fortnightly Newsletter

SchoolComms is our method of communicating with parents by email, for a range of issues, from bad weather warnings for the whole school, to information for a specific year group reminding parents about a parents evening, as examples.

Every month all parents are sent the Upper School newsletter, which details highlights of the previous two weeks.

General Information

Information such as term dates for the year ahead and forthcoming school events are published on the website and the SIMS Learning Gateway.

Parent/Staff Committee

KAS has a long tradition of being welcoming to parents and valuing their participation and input. We have an active Parent/Staff Committee who hold regular termly meetings, often with guest speakers, and who get involved in many fundraising and social activities for the school. There is also a tradition for each year group to hold parent parties, at least once a year.
Other Useful Information

**School Six and Pupils’ Council**

The whole school normally elects several members of the Sixth Form to become ‘School Six’ whose role it is to give leadership and to take on certain responsibilities. This group meets with senior staff to discuss general matters of concern in the running of the school.

Students’ Council is a forum run by a group of Sixth Formers who organise regular meetings to discuss issues raised by students. It is during Students’ Council that the school behavioural policies are discussed. Members of School Six represent all students at the Council Meetings of Parent Governors, which take place twice a term.

Sixth Formers are introduced by our Counsellor to some of the techniques of counselling so that they can offer support to younger students.

**Keeping Students After School**

Students might be asked to remain after school for various reasons, or students might ask to see a teacher. We do not have a formal detention system – nor do we want one. We do not give extra work as a punishment, though it would be perfectly reasonable to ask a student to stay to do work that should have, but has not, been done for some reason. Equally it would be perfectly reasonable for a student to ask to see a teacher for extra help. By and large such arrangements will be voluntary and will take account of alternative arrangements out of school that might have been made.

However, when a teacher intends to see a student after school for longer than 10 minutes, 24 hours verbal notice should be given. This is to comply with the law. Once again due consideration must be given to the student’s circumstances, their age, their travel arrangements, special educational needs, or religious observance. It would be unreasonable to insist that a student stay beyond 5pm, though many do so willingly on frequent occasions.

**Personal Belongings**

Each student in Year 7, 8 & 9 is allocated a locker in which to keep personal belongings. They can lock these with their own combination padlock. We are increasingly concerned that many articles of clothing remain unclaimed at the end of each term. As most garments are not marked we are unable to return garments to their owners. It would be very helpful if parents mark items of clothing in a way that would help us return lost property to students.

**School Policies**

All school policies, including the exponent of Alfredian core values and philosophy: The Framework document, are available on the school website at [www.kingalfred.org.uk](http://www.kingalfred.org.uk)
Subjects
Art & Design

Overview

Art in Years 7, 8 & 9 is designed to give students a broad experience of approaches to the subject. We aim to develop a range of practical skills for working in two and three dimensions, allied to an ability to respond creatively and imaginatively to the environment.

In Years 7, 8 & 9 children are introduced to the formal elements that underpin much of Art & Design such as pattern, texture, colour, form, etc. through an imaginative and relevant focus. They are encouraged to explore and develop their ideas, with the aim of building imaginative confidence and promoting a questioning approach. Every student is encouraged to work in a sketchbook, which is hoped will develop into a working journal, where ideas are researched and explored. The sketchbook is a vital part of building an understanding and awareness of the process of designing and making.

Students will have the experience of working in a wide range of materials, from ceramics and construction through to printmaking and graphic design. Some projects are small and detailed, while others lead to large-scale, open-ended outcomes. We aim to develop children’s ability to work creatively as part of a group and individually, to encourage a reflective approach to the creative process, and to promote the idea of creative risk taking as a necessary step to progress. The study of Art & Design in Years 7, 8 & 9 will be a varied and enjoyable experience for all, providing continuity from Lower School in terms of exploration and enquiry.

Assessment of Work

We have a policy of marking without grades. Each student will receive written feedback in the back of their sketchbook for each homework, with an emphasis on self-reflection and self-evaluation throughout the year, to develop the capacity for students to think for themselves and develop growing responsibility for their progress.

Homework

Homework is generally set twice each half term in students’ sketchbooks. It is hoped they will spend between 30 and 45 minutes on homework. They will range from artist research to photography to practical studies. The sketchbook should last them throughout Years 7 and 8 and will become a document of their progress through those years. A new book will be provided in Year 9.

Equipment Required

Students will need some soft pencils (HB-3B), colour pencils, felts, and maybe a small watercolour set. Glue and scissors will also be essential. Other materials such as some acrylic or gouache paints are not essential but would be increasingly useful.

Parental Involvement

Students take great pride in their sketchbooks. Encourage them to use them for their own work as well as schoolwork, and to take their time over artwork and its presentation. A sketchbook is a place to try out ideas and make mistakes, to stick in interesting images and ideas, as well as a record of a child’s progress.

We take every teaching group on a gallery visit each year, but visiting museums and galleries as a family is hugely beneficial.

Further Study

Design & Technology

Overview

Design & Technology is based in a purpose-built centre at Ivy Wood. We have two fully equipped workshops and two large studios, with seventeen computers in each studio – one for each student.

During Years 7, 8 & 9 DT is taught as a foundation course aiming to give a taste of different aspects of the subject. For those who want to take the subject further, it also provides a sound basis for work at GCSE level.

DT involves children developing their awareness of the material environment; learning to identify problems or opportunities; learning which approach to apply to solve a particular problem; and learning how to work through the design process.

The subject is taught through a wide range of projects using wood, metal and plastics as the main materials. Some of the projects are quite simple such as designing and making an interlocking wooden toy and some are more complex.

It is hoped that the three years spent doing DT in Years 7, 8 & 9 will be enjoyable as well as a good preparation for exam work for those who want to continue the subject to GCSEs and beyond.

Assessment of Work

Students work is commented on and discussed but grades are not given. However, the students are involved in peer assessment at the end of each project, which involves evaluative comments, marks and grades. Students are also involved in a self-assessment at the end of the year.

Homework

Homework is a strong feature of the design phase of each project and, although it continues throughout, it becomes less demanding during the making phase.

Equipment Required

Students are expected to have HB pencils, coloured pencils, felt tips, a ruler and a black pen. The Pilot Hi-Techpoint V5 is recommended but any fine line black pen would be good enough.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to take their children to places like the Design Museum, the Craft Museum, the V&A or the Science Museum as it helps to develop children’s design vocabulary and visual awareness. Discussion with their children about homework or their projects is also encouraged.

Further Study

Design & Technology can be studied at GCSE and A level.

Students wanting to do DT at A level do not necessarily have to have done DT GCSE. However, good grades in Art are expected.

The King Alfred School | Out of the heart springs life
Drama

Overview

Drama is taught at KAS as a practical artistic subject in its own right, where the emphasis lies in creating, performing and responding to drama. We have two large drama spaces, a black box and a rehearsal studio. Each room has lighting bars and access to sound boards. The Phoenix Theatre located in Ivy Wood is also used for larger school performances.

During their time in Years 7, 8 & 9 students will be introduced to a broad range of drama techniques and performance skills, including improvisation, stimulation, tableau, thought tracking and hot-seating. They will take on and sustain roles in order to consider how individuals or groups behave and handle conflict; students will then try out different solutions by using dramatic play. They will acquire a deeper understanding of themselves, issues and the world around them whilst improving their confidence and communication skills.

We will also learn about the key concepts that underpin drama, including plot, narrative, use of time, tension, settings and symbols.

The main aim of the department is to offer students a safe and happy environment in which to share ideas, develop their understanding and learn to work with others co-operatively. We take a holistic approach to drama whilst also laying the foundations for GCSE.

Assessment of Work

We encourage students to develop a critical approach to their own drama work and to the performances of others. We provide oral feedback each lesson and students will be expected to share their responses. Each unit of work will culminate in some sort of assessed performance. Students will reflect on their own learning and that of their peers and will be required to complete a self-assessment sheet that is kept in their file. We provide students with an assessment booklet to guide them through this process and offer clear targets so they understand how to improve their work.

Homework

Although there is no formal homework, we often set one-off writing or research tasks to support their learning. Students are also encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities and productions.

Parental Involvement

Parents can help students in Drama by taking them to the theatre, reading reviews together and sourcing plays that their child enjoys. A visit to The Theatre Museum is also an enjoyable way to extend their learning. Parents are always welcome to come to student performances.

Further Study

GCSE; A level Theatre Studies; BTEC Level II (Performing Arts).
English

Overview

English in Years 7, 8 & 9 concentrates on the development of written and spoken language through the teaching of a range of literary and non-literary texts, including media, with the aim of encouraging individuality, creativity, and academic challenge. The course is designed to enable each student to gain confidence, enjoyment and understanding in the four key areas of English: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

In Years 7, 8 & 9 English is organised into approximately half-termly units, which have a topic or text as the central focus. We have a strong commitment to the reading of whole texts and this study involves a wide range of activities focused on discussion and both analytical and creative writing. Teaching and learning adapted to the individual student is a key element of our work and we work closely with the Learning Support department to ensure that every student can achieve the key skills of literacy that will help them to fulfil their potential.

We also believe in the importance of independent, wider reading and in Year 7, 8 & 9 devote one lesson a fortnight to this; the department is located next to the Library so students have regular opportunities to discuss and choose books with the librarian and their English teacher. To supplement this we may also have specific periods in the year when the students are able to work on individualised reading projects, producing booklets of recommendations for wider reading.

Assessment of Work

Our aim is to enable students to become independent, confident learners and we concentrate on giving constructive, detailed and supportive written and oral feedback to reinforce progress. We also encourage students to reflect on their work through self-evaluation and response to written and oral feedback. Each half-term one piece of work is assessed for writing and one piece for reading, so that students and teachers can monitor and reflect on progress in technical skills, creativity and understanding. Additionally, one assessed speaking and listening assignment is carried out per term.

Homework

Homework is the extension and consolidation of work done in class. In Year 7 students start with approximately half an hour a week and this will increase gradually during the Middle Years. By the end of Year 9 students are beginning to prepare for GCSE English and Literature. They are expected to spend an hour on homework. In the week before holidays we usually select several books in order to encourage students to develop their enjoyment of sustained wider reading as a regular, independent activity.

Equipment Required

In English students are expected to write with a pen and to underline headings with a ruler. They will also need to bring their copy of the text we are reading in class. In reading lessons they need to have their current library book. We provide exercise books, paper and neat folders in which they keep their assessed work.

Parental Involvement

In Year 7 we distribute reading lists which give suggestions about encouraging reading at home. We appreciate parents supporting their child in ensuring that homework is handed in on the designated day. We are happy to discuss with the student any difficulties arising with the work, particularly prior to the day on which it is to be submitted.

Further Study

All students study the OCR GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature in Years 10 and 11. A substantial number of students choose English Literature A level in the Sixth Form.
French

Overview

In Upper School we put the emphasis on teaching the right balance of the four skills in the same lesson. Practising reading, listening, speaking and writing skills helps the students’ language awareness and increases their ability to be accurate in all forms of communication. Pupils also study grammar in depth which supports their literacy skills. Building on from their Lower School experience, students are encouraged to improve on their aural recognition in starter activities. The new vocabulary and sentence patterns are taught at the beginning of every lesson with the help of visuals for meaning. Students will then be required to progressively assimilate certain sentence patterns to develop their understanding. More able students are encouraged to choose differentiated extension tasks in class.

This mix of activities in the same lesson will reinforce the new vocabulary and sentence structures for students who learn in different ways in mixed ability groups. We ask students to listen for detail or for gist, to practise role plays, do some creative writing or practise a new sentence structure in a grammar exercise. Reading activities also feature regularly with questions both in the target language and in English.

We use a modern and exciting French course called Studio, which has an up-to-date course content and interactive software. All students are supplied with a workbook, which allows them to reinforce the grammar points and vocabulary taught in lessons.

It is not a disadvantage for students who have not studied French in their previous school to join KAS in Year 7.

Assessment of Work

In lessons, the department uses formative assessment on a regular basis. We do not want to formally assess every activity we do and the use techniques such as traffic lighting enables the students to let us know how well they are doing. We encourage students to come and see us if they have any questions.

However, we also rely on traditional vocabulary and verb testing and we devise more open-ended assessment tasks throughout the year. These tests are invaluable in helping us to identify which topic areas or grammar points could be revisited and also to provide targets for children on how to improve.

Homework

As frequent exposure is the key to language learning there will be homework at least once a week in French. This could take the form of a traditional writing assignment, learning spellings and conjugations or could be more informal, such as a poster or Powerpoint presentation.

Equipment Required

There are no major expenses associated with French. The textbook and related materials cost about £25.00. You might want to invest in an easy learning bilingual dictionary at home as internet translation services are often unreliable and unhelpful.

Parental Involvement

We have successfully worked with parents whose children find languages difficult. In some cases it has been extremely successful to email parents to inform them of their son or daughter’s homework, progress or difficulties. Parents can then ensure that their child spends sufficient time on his or her language homework.

Further Study

IGCSE; A Level.


Geography

Overview

The world is constantly changing and because of that, so is geography. With a focus that encourages students to consider and make sense of their future role in the sustainable development of the planet, parents may be pleasantly surprised by the ways the subject has changed since they were at school. Because geography is about the inseparability of the physical and human-created environments in which we live, we aim to challenge students to solve problems and make decisions on the crucial issues likely to dominate their lives.

Skills and Topics

The fundamental skills that underpin an understanding of our world are important and, alongside the various role plays and games that help students empathise with different attitudes and values, the development of geographical literacy, numerical interpretation and map work skills form a core part of lesson time. Investigative fieldwork is a key aspect and a variety of opportunities both in and around school and off-site are offered throughout the Middle Years. We aim to generate enthusiastic independent young thinkers capable of making well-informed decisions as citizens of an increasingly complicated world.

Our syllabus changes regularly to reflect current thinking and remain relevant, from September 2016 it will be as follows.

YEAR 7 - ‘All Around Me’
- Wild Planet
- Geography in the news: Volcanoes & Earthquakes
- Geography & Sport, a field work investigation
- Britain’s Coast

YEAR 8 - ‘People & the Environment’
- People in Extreme Environments
- Population Explosion
- Flooding on the River Thames, a field work investigation
- Sustainable Communities

YEAR 9 - ‘Global Issues’
- Model United Nations – Climate Change
- Global inequalities
- ‘High speed Britain’
- Individual research project on a current issue of students’ own choice, eg crime, fashion industry, global sport, ethical shopping, etc

Assessment of Work

A variety of assessment tasks are offered in Years 7, 8 & 9 allowing all students to have opportunities to demonstrate achievement. Feedback will inform students about their strengths and areas for improvement. Students will also be asked to assess their own work from time to time as an aid to becoming more independent learners. Each student will build a Geography assessment portfolio across Years 7, 8 & 9, that they will bring home at the end of Year 9. It will allow students and teachers to monitor their progress and generate a record of their work.

Homework

Homework is clearly linked to work being done in lessons and can be a way for students to explore aspects of personal interest to them and to develop independent study skills. Approximately 30 minutes at any one time would be expected in Year 7, increasing to one hour in Year 9. Some project or research work may stretch over several weeks. Students are always welcome to complete homework in the Geography department during breaks or after school.

Equipment Required

Students should arrive at each lesson with basic equipment such as pens, pencils, a ruler, scissors, glue, colour pencils, their exercise book and folder.

Parental Involvement

Parents can help by looking up information about holiday destinations on the internet, encouraging interest in world current events through newspapers, online news sites like the BBC’s Newsround and television documentaries, giving opportunities to use maps or arranging visits to places such as the Museum of London or the Crystal; a sustainable cities exhibition in London Docklands.

Further Study

GCSE Geography is an option for study in Years 10 and 11; A level Geography in Year 13.
History

Overview
The aim of the History Department is to inspire and engage students with the study of the past. History in Years 7, 8, and 9 provides a broad overview of major historical developments locally, nationally and globally over the last millennium. We teach from a diverse range of perspectives, telling powerful stories while emphasising that histories are often contested interpretations of evidence. By the end of year 9, students aim to equip students with the analytical and critical skills necessary to make sense of and engage with the 21st Century world. Many resources for these courses can be found on the Canvas website, and is increasingly being used for students to submit their work.

Year 7: 1066-1603
- Who am I? Who are we? An introduction to the concept of identity.
- Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?
- Why did people join the Crusades?
- What was important to a Medieval peasant?
- When and why have different groups migrated to London?

Year 8: 1603-1918
- Why did Henry reform the Church?
- How did Elizabeth defeat the Armada?
- Why was there a Civil War in England?
- What were the features of the Industrial Revolution?
- What was the Enlightenment?

Year 9: 20th Century History
- Why did the First World War break out in 1914?
- How did Hitler rise to power?
- What was the nature of the Nazi state?
- How were different countries affected by the Second World War?
- How should we remember the Holocaust and other genocides?

Year 9 students visit the battlefields of WW1 as part of their studies.

Assessment of Work
Every year students complete three ‘milestone’ tasks to at the end of particular units of work, in addition to regular assessment of classwork, homework, and shorter quizzes. Milestone tasks might be in the form of an essay, a piece of creative writing, a design, or an oral presentation.

Homework
This is either set weekly or over several weeks, as appropriate.

Parental Involvement
We welcome the involvement of parents, particularly when they can share specialist knowledge with the students.

Further Study
IGCSE (Cambridge) – includes the study of the breakdown of international peace in the interwar years, the development and early years of the Cold War. There is an in-depth study of China from 1930-90. Students are offered the opportunity to visit Berlin to further their understanding of these periods.

A Level History (Edexcel) – includes units studying Britain, 1625-1701, the Russian Revolution, and Civil Rights in the USA from 1850-2009.
ICT

Overview

All students in Years 7, 8 & 9 have one ICT lesson per week. The lessons take place within dedicated ICT labs, where the students have access to industry standard software and hardware.

The aim of ICT is to develop confident, independent and resilient users who can competently communicate ideas, handle information, and make decisions and problem solve using ICT.

Within the ICT curriculum we strive to give students the knowledge, skills and strategies to make the best use of information technologies to accomplish ICT and Computing tasks and to support their learning in other subjects. Most of the curriculum is topic based and wherever possible situated in an authentic context which has meaning to the students and gives them the greatest amount of control.

In Years 7 and 8, some of the areas covered are; Control and programming, HTML and Web design, Movie making and editing, Photoshop, Flash animation, Internet risks and Cyber safety. This is in addition to developing basic hardware skills.

In Year 9 we continue to introduce students to industry standard software and technology and ask them to either work in a team or individually to produce a product. Students work on three projects, which will reinforce the skills they have developed in Years 7 and 8. This year it’s a Silent movie, which will require the students in teams to not only produce the film and edit it, but also the promotional material and music to go along with it. The second project is graphics based and requires the students to look at graphical communication and working with images, film, animation etc to interpret a theme. The third project is 3D product development. The students use CAD software to design and develop a product, which they are then able to print on our 3D printers.

The topics covered during Years 7, 8 & 9 are aimed at providing students with a solid foundation, for general use in other subjects and outside of school as well as providing a sound basis for those wishing to do Computing at GCSE and A-level.

Assessment of Work

Assessment is viewed as a means of improving learning. Most assessment within ICT is of a formative nature, where students are given constructive feedback, which they then use to adapt and improve their work. This takes place during lessons through discussion between teacher and student and student to student, as well as through marking the work produced. Students also carry out peer and self evaluations of the work they produce and are involved in developing the assessment criteria for each topic, thus enabling them to be more in tune with what is expected of them. Each student produces an e-portfolio of their work each year.

Homework

Homework in ICT is set to enhance the learning taking place in class. It is not set every lesson as there are great differences in facilities available to the students at home. The homework set tends to be an extension or enhancement of the work done in class.

Equipment Required

Students are expected to bring basic stationery to lessons: pen, pencil, ruler, stage book (for when homework is set) and a memory stick or accessible email address, which will enable them to transfer work between home and school.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about what they are doing in ICT lessons as well as encourage them to use ICT for more than just games. If any child shows a particular interest in a certain area of the subject, this interest can often be developed further both in and out of school.

Further Study

Computer Science can be studied at GCSE and A level.
Latin

Students have the opportunity at the end of Year 8 to opt for Latin as one of their Year 9 languages alongside either French or Spanish.

Why Latin?

Latin is the language that was spoken by the ancient Romans and it spread across the lands they conquered. As a result, many modern European languages derive directly from Latin: notably Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Even English owes about half its vocabulary to Latin: notably Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Even English owes about half its vocabulary to Latin. Why is the spelling of ‘debt’ so strange? Because it comes from Latin debeo, I owe. Latin is especially helpful with the language of Science and Medicine, because it is the source of so many of the terms they use.

Latin is very logical. Studying it helps you understand the rules of grammar and it can help you write better English as well as giving you a base for the understanding of an array of other languages, even those not directly related to it. Latin is rarely spoken nowadays, so it is a great option for those who prefer to learn a language through writing and reading. It also means you get to read real Latin literature very quickly.

Latin is the way into the history of the ancient Mediterranean and since it was widely used right up until the 16th Century, and was still generally known by the educated elite beyond that date, it is an essential tool for the study of later times as well. Latin stories, some of which you may read in the original language, lie behind much Western Art. For all of these reasons Latin is a subject very highly regarded by elite universities and, also, it is intellectually stimulating and fun!

Overview

We use the Cambridge Latin Course Book 1 which provides an immersive approach to language learning and embed a broad understanding of Roman culture and society.

Book 1 is set in ancient Pompeii in A.D.79 immediately prior to the devastating eruption of Mont Vesuvius and the stories in the textbook give us insight into the ups and downs of a typical Pompeian family. During the course of the year we look at a range of topics including Roman housing, baths, food and dining, the theatre and gladiators!

The focus of learning Latin is very much on ensuring that students have sufficient knowledge and confidence that they can accurately translate a passage of Latin into fluent English. There is no speaking or listening as part of formal assessment. While we do some work translating from English into Latin, the ability to do this is not a requirement of the course.

The Student Experience

"I have seen Latin through all stages of the school; from only just beginning to study the subject ...to completing the A-Level in Year 13...... It feels extremely satisfying knowing that you are able to read and understand the writings of great poets and historians that have been dead for thousands of years, but the elegance of Roman poetry and fascinating details of the history are on display in the set texts. Learning Latin makes me feel like I am part of journey that has lasted for thousands of years and that I am almost preserving this ancient language that has served humanity so well for so long.”

(Grey, Year 13 – currently studying Natural Sciences at Imperial College, London)

If you are interested in Languages, History or even English, Latin could be your subject. As not many people do it, it can set you apart from the crowd and it is very rewarding. You not only learn a new language, you also learn about ancient Roman life and study writing by Roman writers such as Virgil. If you are even slightly considering studying Latin we highly recommend it; it is hard work but so much fun.

Further Study

GCSE, A Level Latin; A Level Classical Civilisation.

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Mathematics

Overview
At KAS we take into Year 7 children with very different backgrounds in Mathematics and, indeed, with a very large spread of abilities and attainments. They have experienced different syllabuses and teaching styles. We aim to provide a wide-ranging course covering a broad spectrum of topics to secure a sound foundation upon which to develop further in Upper School. Within this course we expect children to: appreciate Mathematics as an essential element of communication and as a powerful tool in problem-solving; become aware of relationships within Mathematics; learn to work systematically both independently and in co-operation with others; and gain in confidence and be able to tackle mathematical tasks of appropriate difficulty without anxiety.

Organisation
We use the SMP Interact scheme for Years 7 to 8. The scheme uses a variety of teaching approaches to stimulate students and foster their understanding and enjoyment of mathematics. In addition to this we have regular lessons on numeracy and using non-calculator methods for solving problems.

In both Years 7 and 8 the classes are usually divided into three or four mixed groups. Teaching styles can vary from group work to teacher led lessons and may include short projects involving investigational and practical tasks.

In Year 9 we begin to study the AQA GCSE course that continues into Years 10 and 11 and we group pupils according to ability. Pupils are taught in four groups with different abilities working towards GCSE at either Foundation or Higher level. Children, however, may – and do – change groups depending on their progress and development. The core AQA materials are extended and enhanced by other resources developed within the school. Computers and smart board resources are utilised and are becoming more important. We monitor the changes that are taking place in mathematics education and amend our programme as needed.

Assessment of Work
Both classwork and homework are marked but grading is rarely used. We encourage active involvement from children to become increasingly responsible for their own learning. Tests are approximately once a term and we operate a ‘traffic light’ system for topics: green means the topic has been fully understood, amber means a little extra follow-up work is required and red means considerable follow-up is required.

Support
The maths department run morning drop in sessions every weekday from 8:05am until registration at 8:55am. These sessions are aimed at pupils who might need help with homework, are having difficulty with a topic being taught in class or just need a quiet place to work.

Homework
Homework plays an important part in the training children require to become responsible for their learning. On average approximately one hour’s homework is set per week in Year 7, 1½ hours in Years 8 and 9 and up to 2 hours in Years 10 and 11.

Equipment Required
Calculator: each child who requires a calculator will be supplied with the one recommended by the school (the cost will be added to your bill). Other materials: additional materials are provided by the school. However, children should have a ruler, pencil and a pair of compasses.

Parental Involvement
It is helpful to us and to students if parents check that their children are completing homework and that they are coping with the work being set. If parents are worried about their child’s progress, or about our scheme, we urge them to contact the school. We will be pleased to help in any way we can.

Further Study
There are a range of mathematics competitions that children are encouraged to enter with appropriate work, help and support provided. There is also a weekly Maths Club, which is purely for the enjoyment of mathematics and can have children of ages 8 to 18 mixing together in a supportive environment.

Music

Overview
Music in Years 7, 8 & 9 is based on practical work.

The aim is to involve every child in a range of classroom musical activities including:

- Listening to and appraising a wide range of music from popular styles, world music and western classical music. The emphasis is on ‘active’ listening with students being required to complete written answers, analysing aspects of the piece to which they are listening as well as listening to and appraising their peers’ music-making.

- Performing and improvising a range of musical material for individual, group and classroom performance.

- Composing in a range of styles, putting musical theory into practice using technology, utilising the latest releases of Logic Pro X (sequencing) and Sibelius (notation) software, as well as a wide range of iPad apps.

Studying a musical instrument presents a wonderful opportunity to develop skills that can be enjoyed throughout the rest of a person’s life. The Music Department provides a rich musical experience for all children whatever their interests and abilities. A large team of specialist visiting instrumental and vocal teachers offer individual lessons in all orchestral instruments, piano, voice, drum kit, and electric and acoustic guitar. Regular informal concerts provide the opportunity to build confidence on the concert platform, whilst larger scale termly events cater for those who participate in one or more of the department’s co-curricular activities, including Chamber Choir, Jazz Choir, Middle School Choir, Baroque ‘n’ Roll, Brass Ensemble, Flute Choir, Orchestra, Jazz Works and Percussion Group. Weekly clubs including Music Theory and Sound Production support those who opt to take ABRSM practical or public exams in Music or Music Technology, as well as those who learn solely for pleasure. A highlight in the school calendar is that annual Upper School production, when the Drama and Music Departments join forces to stage a musical. Recent shows include Into the Woods, Guys and Dolls, Grease and Chicago.

Assessment of Work
Students are assessed verbally throughout Years 7, 8 & 9 when both the teacher and their peers give feedback and positive criticism of their performances or compositions. All tasks given allow students to be creative whatever their individual capabilities are in this subject. In group work care is taken to vary the dynamics and ability of the students working together. Students are encouraged to use self-assessment at the end of a unit of work when they complete a self-assessment form, which is an appraisal of their development and achievement in that unit of work. Final performances of compositions are recorded on CD and student’s achievements are logged by the teacher to build up a record of each student’s progress throughout the Middle Years.

Homework
Although there is no formal homework set in this subject, students are encouraged to take part in one of the many extra-curricular activities and productions available.

Equipment Required
Students are required to bring pencils and rubbers for notation work. Students who play an instrument will be encouraged to use these wherever possible in the units of work.

Parental Involvement
Parents are encouraged to support their children when they are performing in one of the school concerts or volunteer to help serve refreshments, which are provided by Parent/Staff. For those children who take individual music lessons, parents play a leading role in helping their children establish a good practice regime.

Further Study
AQA GCSE and A level Music. Edexcel A level Music Technology.
Physical Education

Overview

The main aim of the KAS PE Department is to give each child experience in a wide range of sports and physical activities. During their time in Years 7, 8 & 9 students will take part in over ten different sports. As well as these, the children will participate in individual activities such as cross-country, athletics, fitness training, swimming, gymnastics, orienteering, body conditioning and circuit training.

Considering the location and size of KAS our facilities are very good indeed. We have provision on site for most mainstream sports: a fitness and dance studio, three multi-purpose astro-turf courts, a football pitch, a modern, well-equipped sports hall and one ancillary sports hall.

The emphasis during PE lessons at KAS is not on competition. Of course, this has its place but more importantly we aim to ensure that everybody in the class has worthwhile learning experiences, is aware of the importance of physical health and fitness and has a great time as well.

For those children who want to take their sport more seriously, or enjoy the challenge of competing against other schools, we have school teams playing football, basketball, tennis, badminton, netball, hockey, rounders and cricket on a regular basis in league, cup and friendly matches. We also compete in cross-country running and athletics championships.

Assessment of Work

Assessment is an essential part of teaching and learning. It is concerned with the identification of what would constitute learning during a lesson, so that the teacher and the student can look for specific evidence and be able to plan for future improvements. Assessment for learning is present at every PE session in the shape of continuous feedback both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Through self and peer assessment we collect evidence of progress in the following ways:

- At the end of each games or activities unit, the children assess their technical ability, attitude, knowledge and progress they make. These outcomes, supported by teacher’s feedback are then recorded in students’ PE profile.

- The assessment in Circuit Training, Cross-country running, Athletics and Swimming takes place each week and results are recorded and regularly published. The students are able to evaluate their performance instantly and plan for future work.

- The students test their fitness three times a year and compare their fitness level to the average, top and bottom KAS performance. They are able to identify weaker areas and, guided by the teacher, plan for improvement.

Equipment Required

Indoor and outdoor sports shoes, tracksuit, shorts, sports top, swimming gear, football/astro-turf boots and mouthguard.

Parental Involvement

There is a great deal happening in the PE Department. For many children, sport plays a major part in life at KAS and there is always something going on during school lessons, breaks, after school, weekends and holidays. Much of the extra-curricular activities depend upon the help and support of the parent body. Assistance with transport, expertise, money, equipment and catering is always more than welcome.

Further Study

GCSE PE course runs in Years 10 and 11 for students who wish to further extend their knowledge and physical skills.
Science

Overview

The science program in Years 7 & 8 is designed to pique the intellectual curiosity of our students in order to stimulate intrinsic motivation in science and the world around them. We do this by exposing our students to an interesting program of study and a hard-boiled approach to science. We now teach AGA GCSE (9-1) from the beginning of Year 9 so it is crucial that our course of study encompasses the national curriculum. We try to go beyond the national curriculum and make our subject as fascinating for the students as possible. We do this by cultivating a range of skills such as problem solving, investigation skills, analysis and reflection. We try to embed the schemes of work with lots of science in the context of the world at large. Science is also a goldmine of hot topics ideal for debate and stimulating discussion. We teach evidence based science encouraging logic and reason when discussing ethical issues.

Science teachers have common objectives. When these objectives are met, staff are encouraged to be creative in their approach to topics. We embrace technology in our classrooms, from the student’s own smart phones to data loggers to CANVAS, our new VLE currently on trial in the Science Department. We also encourage a metacognitive approach to learning as a community sometimes involving whole class projects.

We have 5 brand new state of the art labs and a team of 3 quality technicians supplying 6 teachers everyday with quality practical resources. We are passionate about the teaching and learning of Science at KAS.

Educational Trips and Clubs

We take our students on trips to Greenwich Observatory, the Science Museum, on field work trips (Year 8 are currently undertaking a survey of Hampstead Heath as part of the Ecology module). From September we are putting on a “Young Scientist” competition (Science Expo) which will involve longer term projects undertaken by teams of interested students. In this way we encourage students looking to extend what we do in lessons. Drop-ins are available for Year 7 and 8 in each faculty once per week for students looking for help with any problems.

Year 7 Modules

6 Modules. 1 per half term. There are two modules from each of the three sciences. Currently they are:

- Cells and reproduction
- Light and sound
- Matter and particles
- Astronomy
- Forensic Science
- Chemical reactions

Year 8 Modules

6 Modules. 1 per half term. There are two modules from each of the three sciences. Currently they are:

- Forces and energy
- Electricity and magnesium
- Earth Science
- Chemical reactions 2
- Hampstead Heath survey
- Health and fitness

Assessment

We have developed many types of assessment techniques ranging from formal to informal. We are aware of the pitfalls of over-assessing students. Our assessments are meaningful and worthwhile. We employ summative tests in modules where most suitable. However, in some modules developing investigation skills is the best option. Investigation skills are formally assessed. Giving students an opportunity to design an experiment involving multiple variables. Students explore accuracy and precision identifying outlying results, analysis of data and evaluating problems associated with the practical issues. Topics like Health and Fitness lend themselves to case studies, whereas topics like Forensic Science aren’t formally assessed because it wouldn’t be appropriate.

We encourage reflective learning; feedback should be used as a vehicle for improvement. Typically our modules last for half a term and students can expect at least one formally assessed piece of work and several informally assessed pieces per half term.

Homework is given when deemed appropriate. 30 minutes per week in Year 7 on average and slightly more in Year 8.

Further Study

The teaching of AQA GCSE (9-1) Science begins in Year 9 giving the students 3 years to achieve Double or Triple award IGCSE, depending on aptitude and proclivity.

A level Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
Spanish

Overview

Spanish in Years 7, 8 & 9 is based on acquiring the basic skills to convey and understand information, to communicate with other speakers of Spanish, to listen for enjoyment, to read for pleasure, and to develop cultural awareness. Students are taught the principles and relationship of sounds and writing, how to listen carefully for gist and detail, how to ask and answer questions, how to use context and other clues to interpret meaning, how to develop their independence in learning and using the target language.

Students are made aware of Spanish grammar, how to apply it and how to express themselves using a range of vocabulary and structures. We emphasize developing techniques for memorising words, phrases and short extracts. We also encourage students to 'play' with the language creatively and imaginatively.

We use Mira in Years 7-8, a lively and easy-to-use Spanish course that serves a wide ability range in Year 9 we use Viva which prepares pupils for the rigours of Years 10-11. The courses are combined with authentic material, such as magazines, songs and films, available in the school’s library. The students can use them to reinforce the topics studied in class and to see Spanish in its real context. We give students the opportunity to practise Spanish in real situations, for example, we take Year 9 to a Spanish restaurant to speak and order food in Spanish.

Assessment of Work

In lessons, the department uses formative assessment on a regular basis. We do not want to formally assess every activity we do and the use of formative assessment enables the students to let us know how well they are doing. Students regularly carry out self-assessment to let us know which aspects of Spanish they have not fully understood and we encourage students to come and see us if they have any questions.

However, we also rely on traditional vocabulary and verb testing and we devise more open-ended assessment tasks throughout the year. These tests are invaluable in helping us to identify which topic areas or grammar points could be revisited and also to provide targets for children on how to improve.

Homework

Students are expected to hand in at least one piece of work a week. Homework reinforces what has been done in class and it can consist of written work, dialogues, role plays, songs or learning spellings and conjugations.

Equipment Required

It is advisable to buy a learner’s bilingual dictionary and verb table to use at home, for example Collins Easy Learning Spanish verbs and dictionary.

Parental Involvement

We have successfully worked with parents whose children find languages difficult. In some cases it has been extremely successful to email parents to inform them of their son or daughter’s homework, progress or difficulties. Parents can then ensure that their child spends sufficient time on his or her language homework.

Further Study

IGCSE; A Level. •
Out of the heart springs life