

KAN KENT ACADEMIES NETWORK

September 2020 report



Overview

The Kent Academies Network (KAN) comprises Knole Academy, The Skinners' Kent Academy, Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey, John Wallis Church of England Academy, and The Marsh Academy. The university access programme, which KAN delivers, has existed since 2013 and seen four cohorts through to university.

Sevenoaks has been involved with KAN since its inception and took over the leadership from the Accelerate and Access Foundation in 2018. The scheme is supported by Sevenoaks School with the kind generosity of two donors.

- Each year the partner academies identify around five bright Year 9 students to write a personal statement and be put forward for interview. KAN then selects two to three students to be part of the university access programme.
- In the selection we look for academically able and committed students who would benefit from the support of the KAN programme. We also prioritise the Free School Meals 'Ever 6' qualification and university first-generation pupils.
- The students commit to KAN for their remaining time at school (years 10 to 13) and attend annual residential weeks (at Easter and in the summer) and 'meet-up' days (in autumn and spring).
- In small groups students are assigned undergraduate mentors, who play a central role in the delivery of the bespoke residential programmes. Our mentors provide academic support and pastoral guidance throughout the course of the KAN programme via a secure online platform.



Current Students and Mentors

In total we have 44 students across three cohorts (2017–2019), out of an original 50.

In the 2017 cohort there are 12 students (of the original 17) engaged with KAN. They are now in Year 13.

- Eight of these students attended the summer 2020 online event.
- Two students are at John Wallis Church of England Academy, two at The Marsh Academy, two at Knole Academy, one at Skinners' Kent Academy, one at Oasis Academy and four who moved to grammar schools post-16.

In the 2018 cohort there are 12 students (of the original 13) engaged with KAN. They are now in Year 12.

- Six of these students attended the summer 2020 online event.
- Two are at Skinners' Kent Academy, two are at The Marsh Academy, three are at John Wallis Church of England Academy, two are at Knole Academy, three are at Oasis Academy, and one has moved to a different college.

In the 2019 cohort there are 20 students who attended their first residential week in July 2019 and are still engaged with the programme despite disruptions. They are now in Year 11.

- Nine of these students attended the summer 2020 online event.
- Five students are at Knole Academy, five are at Oasis Academy, three are at Skinners' Kent Academy, four are at John Wallis Church of England Academy and three are at The Marsh Academy.

Due to the disruption in spring and summer, we interviewed the 2020 cohort in September and they were onboarded in time for the autumn KAN events.

There are 23 mentors currently working for KAN.

- Eight of the mentors have two years' experience and, of these, three are staying on with KAN (despite starting work or PhDs) in order to see the Year 13s through to graduation.
- Three of the new mentors are former KAN students.
- Mentor specialisms include English, Law, Natural Sciences, Medicine, Politics, Theology, Global Governance, Classics, History Geography, Human Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Sociology and Psychology. We have mentors at undergraduate level and postgraduate level (two PhDs and two MAs).
- The universities the mentors attend include Cambridge, Oxford, Durham, Kent, KCL, UCL, Southampton, Keele, York and LSE.

Updates and Developments

- Due to the disruption of Covid–19 the spring meet–up and Easter residential week in 2020 were cancelled, however the summer residential week was converted to a three day online event on Zoom.
- Isla Phillips has taken over the lead on KAN under the new role of KAN Director.
- In collaboration with the marketing team, Isla Phillips developed both new branding and a new microsite for KAN within Sevenoaks Outreach: <https://outreach.sevenoaksschool.org/kentacademiesnetwork/>
- Our autumn events will include two Zoom mentoring sessions along with a virtual meet–up day. The latter will include academic enrichment and sessions aimed at preparing students to think about, apply or get ready for university.
- We are currently developing a mentor alumni network which the students and current mentors will be able to access for career or HE advice. The network will also enable alumni to stay in touch with KAN and continue to participate in KAN events in their new working capacities. There are currently 24 alumni mentors and we are in contact with 21 of them.
- We are in discussion with the Director of Sevenoaks Summer School about the possibility of five scholarship places for KAN students at the Sevenoaks Summer School.
- We will soon launch a fund which will give grants to KAN students towards extra–curricular or co–curricular courses or travel expenses to visit university open days. The fund will also be open to mentors who apply for leadership development. We will privilege first generation students and expect the training course applied for to be relevant to KAN.
- In order to widen impact, during 2017–2018 Sevenoaks offered 12 places per KAN school for the Brilliant Club Scholars programme in Year 9 or Year 10 and Sevenoaks HE events have been opened to Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 in both KAN and non–member schools. In 2019–2020 a subscription to the university application resource Unifrog was also taken up, with access given to Year 11 and Year 12 KAN students.

Updates and Developments

The 2019 Review and Future Development Report summarised that Sevenoaks is committed to continuing to support the evolution and growth of the programme over the coming years, to:

- Impact greater numbers of students.
- Align the identity of the programme more closely with schools involved to increase their ownership.
- Make it more efficient and cost effective.
- Sustainably scale up the programme through digital technology.
- Assist schools by extending and enriching their resources.
- Connect students to an aspirational network of peers and mentors.
- Provide opportunities to develop soft skills.
- Reflect recent changes in the introduction of the Gatsby Benchmarks and the rise in degree apprenticeships.
- Sustain the life of the programme through philanthropic and corporate partnerships.



Impact on the Students

So far, 37 students have completed the full four years of the KAN university access programme. These students comprise the pilot cohorts 2013 – 2016. Out of the 33 known destinations for KAN students who have completed the university access programme 94% (31) achieved places to study for degrees or alternative apprenticeship and training pathways.

- 29 students achieved degree places, one of which is a degree level apprenticeship with National Rail, and one a degree level Engineering apprenticeship.

Universities include: Anglia Ruskin Cambridge School of Art, Buckinghamshire, Canterbury Christ Church, Essex, Glasgow, Hull, Kent, Lincoln, Liverpool, London School of Economics, Loughborough, Newcastle, Nottingham Trent, Portsmouth, Reading, Royal Holloway, Southampton, Sussex, Swansea and Teeside.

- Two took alternative high-achieving routes: management training at Sainsbury's and an Insurance apprenticeship at Lloyds of London.
- Two students did not achieve the A-level grades needed to obtain a university place, although they did aspire to go. One of these students is now looking into officer training with the Royal Navy.
- We are still tracking down the destinations of four students but suspect that they all achieved university places.

A further 20 students have begun but not completed the KAN university access programme. The spread of disengaged students is as follows: two in the 2013 cohort, seven in the 2014 cohort, five in the 2015 cohort, one in the 2016 cohort and five in the 2017 cohort.

- Reasons for disengagement have included students who: pursue vocational courses such as dance and military college; move into the care system; move school; and lack of commitment.
- In 2014 KAN accepted more challenging students and was not able to support them pastorally in order to retain their engagement with the programme.
- In 2017 we trialled accepting a larger cohort of 17, so although five have disengaged we still have 12 students currently engaged with the programme (now in Year 13).

In addition to the quantitative measurement of university destinations KAN has a very significant qualitative impact:

Impact on the Students

- Raising aspirations through consistent mentoring and inspirational speakers at residential weeks.
- Widening subject knowledge through access to undergraduate and postgraduate mentors, along with the Brilliant Club at residential weeks.
- Broadening cultural capital through excursions and experiences.
- Increasing student self-confidence through the intimate size of the programme and opportunities for personal development at KAN events, for example presentation tasks and sessions by 2–3 Degrees, a youth organisation that aims to inspire young people to reach their full potential.
- Increasing student knowledge of university destinations and removing perceived barriers to getting there. This is achieved through information sessions and workshops at KAN events alongside consistent access to the mentors who can talk about their experiences, but also practically help students with researching courses and writing applications.
- The 2019/2020 ImpactEd report for Sevenoaks Outreach found that KAN students had 'higher than average baseline scores for Motivation and Self-efficacy when compared to our national dataset. This reflects the selection process for this programme, where schools are asked to nominate pupils who might particularly benefit from the programme. However, the same pupils scored lower scores for Openness and Extraversion, both averages being close to the national average.' This was based on a survey of 35 KAN students at the 2019 summer residential week.

Below are quotes from the 2016 cohort, who graduated in 2020:

"I would never have considered Cambridge School of Art if I had not been on KAN as we had a look around during one of the summer residentials. And due to the residentials being in Cambridge I feel very safe already as I know where most things are. Thank you so much for being part of this program. It really boosted my confidence and did so much for me!"

"I am looking forward to university and am glad that I managed to make it despite the issues I faced. I would like to continue to hear from KAN and maybe even get involved and give back, as KAN helped me get through some difficult times and inspired me to keep pushing forward."

"KAN played such a big role in my university application using all the notes I'd collected from all the residential trips, as well as all the knowledge I'd gathered along the way about university and support in my academic life so really thankful to the programme."

Impact on the Undergraduate Mentors

Besides from being at the heart of KAN, we believe that there is significant positive impact on the undergraduate mentors in two key areas:

1. KAN hires undergraduate students who are interested in education and social impact and provides high quality CPD and career support. The expertise and interest of the mentors benefits KAN students, while the programme also nurtures future teachers and leaders in the field of social impact.

- Out of the 21 alumni that we are in contact with 12 are working in education or social impact: there are eight teachers, a policy advisor at the Department For Education, a Schools Liaison Officer at Emmanuel College Cambridge; a Graduate Education Worker at Into University and a London Programme Officer at CoachBright. Furthermore, one alumnus is a Research Fellow at Murray Edwards Cambridge and two are continuing their PhDs at Queen Mary University of London and Fitzwilliam College Cambridge.

2. KAN supports first generation university students through the stable, supportive and fulfilling job.

- Three of the new mentors are previous KAN students (2013 cohort and 2015 cohort). In the 2021 cycle we have applications from a further 3 KAN students already submitted (from the 2016 and 2017 cohort) and expect more past students to apply.
- KAN is a financially supportive and flexible job for students, which is especially significant for first generation students. In a normal academic year where a mentor works at all events, they can expect to earn between £755–£980, with the salary for an experienced mentor increasing to £980–£1280. We also retain mentors for anywhere between two and four years, at their discretion.

Below are testimonials written by KAN mentors:

“It has affirmed my decision to work in education and potentially run programmes like KAN.”

Jai, mentor 2018–2020, now a Graduate Education Worker at Into University.

Impact on the Undergraduate Mentors

“Participating in KAN has developed my ability to work with young people and given me confidence in teaching and mentoring. The targeted support we’re able to give students during the residential has reaffirmed my desire to work with young people, but has made me think about different ways to do this – for example, I’d previously wanted to teach in the classroom, but I’m now thinking of working in a more university access based role.”

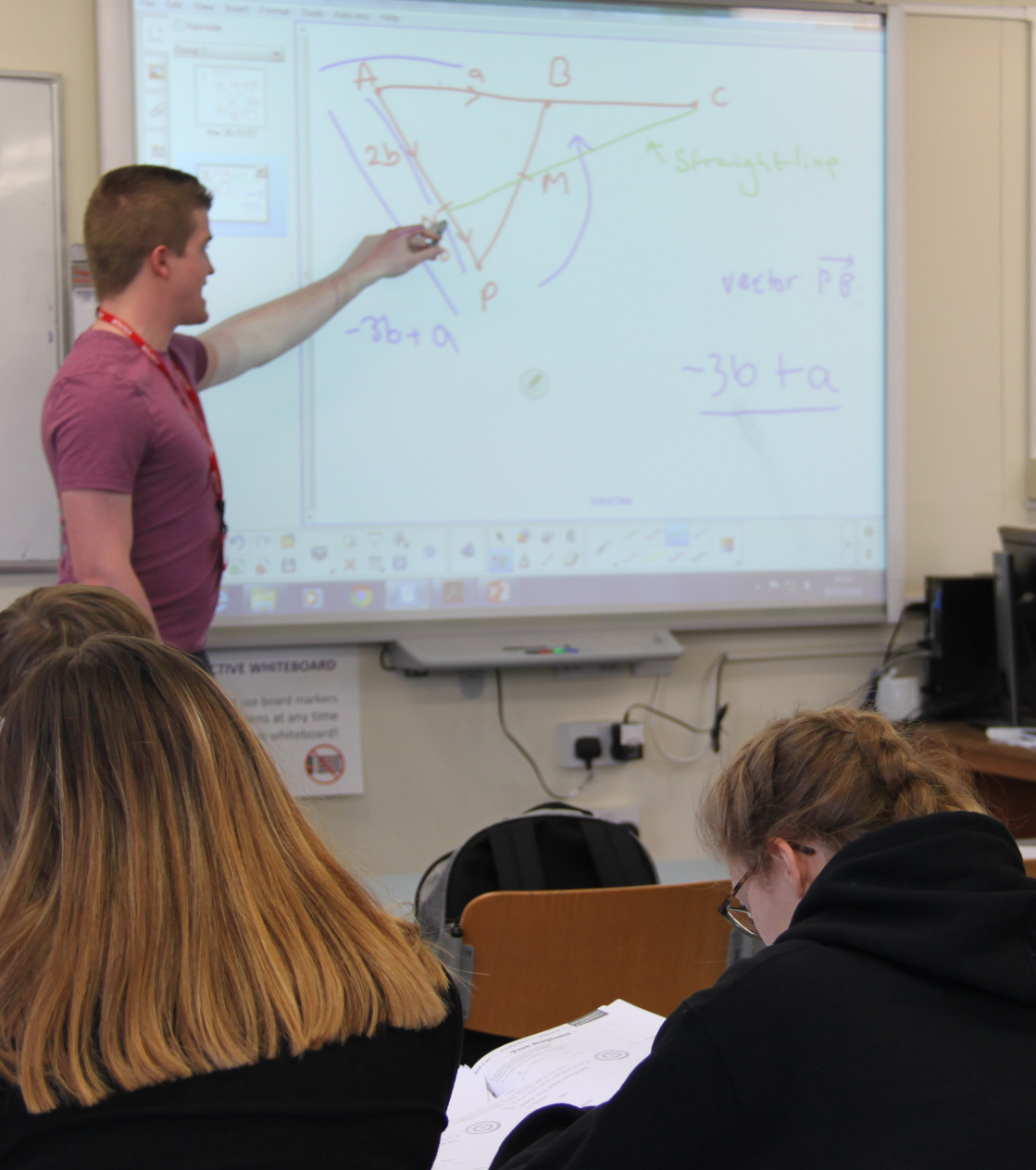
Finn, mentor 2018–2020, now the Schools Liaison Officer at Emmanuel College in Cambridge.

“I was already interested in access, outreach and education, hence my motivation for applying to KAN, but this experience has really transformed my career plans and view of the world. I am now very motivated to pursue a career in this area, and separate to that, I genuinely tell friends and family that KAN is the best thing I do with my time. I love the students and I feel I’m able to make some difference to them, which is amazing. I’ll continue working on the programme as long as you’ll have me!”

Mia, mentor 2018–2020, now a London Programme Officer at CoachBright.



Report written by Isla Phillips, Director of KAN



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